DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 216 482 EC 142 434

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TITLE Working with Schools: For Parents of Children in Need of Exceptional Education.
INSTITUTION Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy, Madison.
SPONS AGENCY Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities, Madison.
PUB DATE Jan 81
NOTE 131p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Advocacy; *Disabilities; Due Process; Elementary Secondary Education; Individualized Education Programs; *Parent Role; Referral; Screening Tests; Student Evaluation; Student Placement
IDENTIFIERS Parent Materials

ABSTRACT

The handbook is designed to help parents and advocates understand their roles in the education of handicapped children. Topics covered in separate chapters are (sample subtopics in parentheses): family supports (other parents as support, advocacy, resources, parent group organizations, typical parents' feelings); screening (cautions, notification requirements, common tests used); evaluation (labels, individualized education programs, independent evaluations, diagnostic and testing terms); individualized educational plan (IEP) on placement (legal roles, IEP conferences); placement (factors in decision making, least restrictive environment); IEP for instruction (role of a good instructional plan); and fair hearings and due process (mediation, lawyers). Each chapter details the process, the parents' role, and tools for that particular topic. (CL)

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WORKING WITH SCHOOLS:

For Parents of Children in Need of Exceptional Education

Louise Elbaum
Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy

January 1981

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We gratefully acknowledge the aid of the following persons who helped conceive and edit this handbook:

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Funding for this project was provided through a grant under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (PL95-602 Title V) from the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities. The information reported herein was compiled pursuant to the State Plan on Developmental Disabilities. The opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the position of the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities or the Department of Public Instruction.

January 1981

INTRODUCTION

History

In 1979 the Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy received a grant from the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities to study barriers to full implementation of laws requiring education for children with handicapping conditions. Information was gathered from a wide variety of sources -- from parents, teachers, school board members, administrators, and advocates, from all areas of the state, from urban and rural districts, from observation, interviews, reviews of public records, and extensive reading. One of the needs identified in this study is that parents often lack information about what to expect in the process of getting exceptional education services for their children. Parents had few resources to help them become effective partners in planning for their children's education. This book provides some aid for parents who need to know what is happening to and for their children in school and how they can help.

What is in this handbook

This book is organized into major sections dealing with separate steps in planning for exceptional education of a child. These steps include:

- Screening (Chapter 2)
- Referral (Chapter 3)
- Evaluation (Chapter 4)
- Individualized Educational Plans (for placement) (Chapter 5)
- Placement (Chapter 6)
- Individualized Educational Plans (for instruction) (Chapter 7)
- Due Process (Chapter 8)
- A final section deals with topics of general information (Chapter 9)

Each section starts with a description of the particular process involved in that step. It tells who does it and how they go about it. There is a discussion of the parent role, both the legally required minimum role and the ways in which parents can use what they know and want for their children in the educational planning for their children. Finally, each section (except IEP for Instruction and General Information) discusses some tools to help parents become actively involved in educational planning. These include lists of concerns,

discussions of special problems that may arise, useful vocabulary and ways for parents to prepare themselves to be active participants at meetings.

Overview of the processes in this handbook

This chart gives the briefest summary of the exceptional education processes. It names a process, gives a simple explanation of why each is done and for whom it is done. The rest of this handbook can fill in the details of how it is done and what parents can do to help.

Process	Why	For Whom
Screening	early detection of school-related problems	all children in school
Referral	start planning for appropriate education	children with suspected school-related problems
Evaluation	identify needs and required services	children who are referred and whose parents agree to evaluation
Individualized Educational Plan (for placement)	identify educational goals and program(s) to meet them	children for whom exceptional education is recommended
Placement	locate child where plan can be carried out	children for whom exceptional education is recommended
Individualized Educational Plan (for instruction)	identify specific goals and methods for reaching them	children placed in exceptional educational education program
Due Process	correct problems and address injustices	children for whom the above processes have failed

Special education or exceptional education

There is little agreement on whether to use the term, special education, or the term, exceptional education. Some districts use special education to mean services which are not covered by the legislation which is discussed in this handbook. Other districts do not use the term, exceptional education, at all. Many use the terms interchangeably.

This handbook uses the term, exceptional education, to refer to services required by Federal Law 94-142 and the State of Wisconsin Statute Chapter 115. People who use the handbook, however, are advised to find out how their local district uses these terms and to adopt that usage.

What is this handbook for?

This book is intended to be a primary resource for parents who want to become full partners in planning for their children who have exceptional educational needs. We suggest that it be used in some, or all, of the following ways:

1) As a resource in a convenient place for parents, such as a public or school library. Parents should feel free to read it, and make copies of sections or pages which interest them or deal with specific problems which they face.

2) As a manual for training parents. This handbook provides a frame of reference for trainers as well as many handouts which could provide the basis for group discussion or homework for parents.

3) As a resource for advocates. Many parent advocates ask for training in concrete techniques for assuring effective parent participation. The tools provided in this handbook are designed to be aides in helping parents identify what they have to offer and how they can offer it effectively.

4) As an aid to educators who wish to encourage parent participation. The use of this book in sections supplemented by specific details of the district procedures should help district educators stimulate good parent-school relations.

How to use this handbook

THIS HANDBOOK IS NOT INTENDED TO BE READ FROM COVER TO COVER. IT SHOULD BE USED AS A RESOURCE. You may wish to approach it section by section as the steps in the process approach. We hope that sections and tools in it will be duplicated and used, written on, revised and saved as part of your records.

Chapter 1. Families, Feelings and Supports

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FAMILIES, FEELINGS AND SUPPORTS

Your family is a resource

As you use this handbook you should remember that your family is probably the most powerful resource you will ever use in the course of the education and development of your children. Like any other resource (or set of resources) it can be used creatively, overlooked, or used up. Since the family is the one set of supports which can be helpful from birth through death, it is good to think about how you use your family.

You might examine who, in your family, assumes major responsibility for communicating with the schools. Mother is not always the only person who should be talking with teachers. Two parents together often help the schools to understand what your child's family is like better than one alone. Sometimes sisters or brothers, aunts or uncles, grandparents or close family friends are helpful in dealing with schools.

Take time to think about your family values and strengths. How does your family define success -- success in sports, in school, in business, in social contacts? What is your cultural heritage? Is it different from others in your community? How does your family function -- is it a close-knit unit or a group of independent individuals?

After considering your family as a unit, remember that your child with exceptional needs is part of that unit. He/she has an effect on family members. Family members have an effect on him/her. In the final analysis, your child is and will be the responsibility of your family. Education which will make that responsibility easier -- which makes the student as independent as possible -- can be called successful.

Thus, the family's job in exceptional education includes:

- helping schools understand the family and the culture surrounding the family
- assuring that the school program takes into account the student's present and future life at home and in the community
- helping develop the best possible program for the individual child involved.

You will need support

All families have a system of supports. They have friends, relatives, and a variety of professionals whom they consult for advice, justification, guidance and comradeship. Parents of exceptional children need all these things as much as other parents. If your child is exceptional, you may have to search harder than most parents to find someone who can be an understanding guide for you.

Do not neglect the job of finding people to support you and advocate with you. They can be extremely helpful early on in helping you deal with your child and the people who serve him/her.

Support from other parents

If you have been aware of your child's handicapping condition for a while, you may have found other parents of children with similar problems or groups of parents from whom you can get advice and understanding friendship. If you have not already found such persons, you may find you need them now. You will need:

- someone who "knows the ropes" about your school district, who has handled exceptional education problems and can give you advice
- someone who knows what is available in your community and can honestly recommend good day care or a doctor or special programs
- someone who will laugh and cry with you, who will appreciate your child's abilities and understand his/her problems, and who can help you think clearly about what is best for your child

Advocacy

Some people who spend a lot of their time helping parents or children get the best possible educational programs call themselves educational advocates, parent advocates or child advocates.

Advocacy can mean many things: It can mean legal representation, such as one would get from a lawyer. It can mean support such as you might get from an adivsor who can help you plan. It

might mean assigning some parent duties to another person, allowing someone you trust to speak for you at meetings. Or it might mean fighting to get needed services in your community, as active parents and educators did in order to pass the laws discussed in this handbook. When this book suggests an advocate, it usually means a supporter and advisor.

The role of an advocate*

An advocate is a person who can be a source of information for parents, and a protector of the rights of child and parents. The advocate is not a legal authority. The advocate is a helper. The advocate could:

- explain educational and legal policies to parents
- appear with parents at a conference or hearing
- help ask questions that need answering
- recommend ways to help parents get decisions made
- be an objective observer of what happens between parents and the school system
- help parents plan for their child
- help parents watch out for their child

How to find helpful people

1) Ask the school exceptional education director for the name of a group and a way to contact them. (Don't worry if the group's name does not sound exactly right for you. Their programs may be more attractive than their name. Or they might be able to tell you of a more appropriate parents' group.)

2) Go to your child's school at Open House. Meet the exceptional education teachers and ask them to introduce you to other parents. Use this opportunity to connect with other

* From a Wisconsin Association for Retarded Citizens checklist from: Training Manual Rights and Responsibilities of Parents under Chapter 89

parents. Get their names and phone numbers.

3) Use your telephone book. Check under Social Service Organizations in the Yellow Pages. Check the names of disabilities, mental health organizations, and the social services departments of local hospitals.

4) Use the list of organizations in the section on General Information. They can direct you to local chapters and members.

How to find the right person

When you are looking for someone to act as a friend, advocate or guide, you need to:

- explain that you want someone to talk to who can give you advice
- briefly explain what has brought you looking for support
- in a word or two, tell what your child's problem seems to be
- ask for a referral

For example, you might say, "My name is Louise Elbaum. My child has just been referred for evaluation for exceptional education. The schools think he may have (name the disability or condition). I am looking for another parent or a parents' group which can help me understand my child and the school process better."

A parent support group -- why?*

Why should you form or join parents' group?

To help you help your handicapped child:

- to get acquainted with other parents with handicapped children -- parents you can work with for mutual help

* Adapted from Charlotte Des Jardins, "How to Organize an Effective Parent/Advocacy Group and Move Bureaucracies," Coordinating Council for Handicapped Children, Chicago.

- to get those services your child is legally entitled to
- to get better services from public and private agencies
- to open a public school special program, if needed
  - a day care center
  - a recreational program
  - a workshop
  - or any other program your child needs
- to plan for your child's future
- to work to provide your child with
  - better schools
  - better work opportunities
  - better housing
  - transportation
  - recreation

Parent power

One parent, alone, can do a lot if he/she is determined enough and willing to work hard enough to get what his or her child needs. But the same parent can do so much more working with other parents, through an effective organization.

Parents know best

Parents are the first teachers of their children and know them best. It is up to parents to make sure that their child gets all the services that he/she is entitled to by law.

You can organize a group*

If there is no group in your community, you may decide to organize one. You may say, "What? Me? I've never organized anything in my life!"

Have you ever organized

- a dinner for friends or relatives?
- a birthday party?
- a group picnic?

If you've ever organized any of those activities, you've certainly used many of the skills needed to organize a parent advocacy group. These skills are simply:

- planning and selecting goals
- identifying who might be members

* Adapted from Charlotte Des Jardins, Ibid.

- planning the activities for the group
- listing what needs to be accomplished
- assigning duties
- following up

Can you do this?

- if you want to badly enough
- if your child needs you to badly enough
- you can do it

Organizing a parent advocacy group at the school your child attends involves:

Find out from your child the names of as many classmates as he/she can remember,and approximately where they live. If he/she knows only one, you have a beginning. You can call that parent, and ask if he/she knows other parents, if his/her child knows other children, etc... Through a series of phone calls you can learn of enough parents to call a meeting.

Write a letter to all parents announcing a meeting to form an advocacy group. Tell parents:

- why you feel a parent advocacy group is needed
- list the problems that you would like to discuss at the organization meeting
- end by saying you would like suggestions from them on how to resolve these problems
- and that you would like their help in forming a parent advocacy group to carry them out.

Sample letter:

CALLING ALL PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN!

A special meeting is being called to organize a PARENT/ADVOCACY GROUP at _____ School.

DATE:
TIME:
PLACE:

ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED:

WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT THEM? COME TO THE MEETING AND TELL US!

For further information call:

YOUR NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE _____

Put the date, time and meeting place in bold letters and center them or box them as shown in sample letter.

Sign your name, with address and phone number, so parents can call if they have any questions or need more information -- as shown in the sample letter.

Tell the school director or principal that you are organizing a Parent/Advocacy Group and would like his/her cooperation. Ask for cooperation in sending out notices. Do not be offended if the school refuses to send you a list of families. The school is required by law to keep such information confidential. But most school officials will gladly send out the notices for you.

Ask that meeting notices be sent from the director's (or principal's) office, with you providing the meeting notices, envelopes, stamps, etc. If the director or principal cannot do it, pass out the announcement at the next parent or PTA function.

Organizing a parent/advocacy group in your community

Establish a Core Group to help you organize the Parent/Advocacy Group. Place an ad in your local paper and write a letter to the editor, asking that other parents contact you to help organize a Parent/Advocacy Group.

Sample ad:

CALLING ALL PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN!

If you are interested in knowing more about exceptional education, come to a special meeting to organize a Parent/Advocacy Group in our community.

DATE:
TIME:
PLACE:

LET'S FIND SOLUTIONS! LET'S PLAN A COURSE OF ACTION!

For further information call:

YOUR NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE _____

Before the meeting:

Decide what issues will be covered at the meeting

- lack of services
- lack of funds to provide quality services
- need for parent information

To make your Parent/Advocacy Group an ACTION GROUP, determine what the unmet needs are in your school, your community, your city, your state. Decide what your goals should be -- both long-range and short-range goals.

Decide what specific needs or problems you want to work on -- and work out a plan of action to reach your goals.

Remember:

- the most effective leaders for the group will be those who are dedicated to and support its goals
- there will be much buried talent and special skills in the group to be uncovered and used
- all children should have <u>at least</u> what they are entitled to by law, because those laws belong to you and to your child

<u>A review of strategies for parents</u>

General:

1) Try communication and cooperation first. Save confrontation for the most important issues.

2) Keep records -- of your child's progress, of phone calls, of meetings. Date them and note who was there and what was decided. Keep these together in a folder in some special place.

3) Write letters -- to make requests, express opinions, record decisions made verbally, thank people.

4) Find people who share your interests and concerns. Help them and let them help you.

5) Think about your goals -- why you think certain things are important.

6) Be open and honest with school personnel.

7) Showing appreciation will help people to feel more cooperative.

At meeting time:

1) Find out what is on the agenda before the meeting.

2) Make your own agenda -- plan what you want to cover and what results you want.

3) Use an advocate if you think you need extra help.

4) Don't skip introductions -- find out who is there and what they do.

5) Start any meeting out with something relaxing -- a funny story about your child or a compliment to the teacher.

6) Then get to work. Avoid rambling.

7) End meetings with a summary -- your version of who has agreed to do what.

8) Keep a written record of meetings.

When you have a problem:

1) Make sure you know what the problem is: what is wrong, why is it wrong, who can change it.

2) Use questions and information gathering as a warning system. Enlisting the help of officials often averts the need for attacking them.

3) Let people know your concerns. Give them a chance to react before setting them up as enemies.

4) Set deadlines. Let people know what you plan to do next, when you plan to do it, and what they could do to solve your problem before you proceed.

5) Make sure that the person you contact is one who can help you. If he/she is not, find out who can.

6) Use each step in the bureaucracy. Different people can accomplish different things, but no one likes people who "go over his/her head".

7) Let people know what you would consider a solution. Allow them the freedom to accomplish it.

8) Do not act in a burst of anger. Wait a day, and use your anger more effectively.

9) Find allies -- groups of parents with similar problems or someone inside the system who shares your concern.

10) Develop a give-and-take relationship. If you can do things for your school district (volunteer time, organize meetings, provide ideas or resources), they may try harder to do things for you.

A few words about feelings

Before starting an exploration of exceptional education, it would be a good idea to give a little attention to feelings and emotions. All parents experience love, anger, frustration, guilt and pride at some point in bringing up their children. Parents of children with exceptional needs are not in any way out of the ordinary when they feel these emotions. It is important to understand that your feelings are normal and usual. If you are not sure about your own particular feelings, it may help to find other parents of children with handicaps to talk to. You may prefer to discuss your feelings with a professional social worker, counselor, or clinical psychologist.

No matter what you think about your feelings, they act as strong motivators. The following paragraphs deal with a few common feelings and ways you can use them to your child's advantage.

Love and pride: Love and pride are great motivators. Children, all children, quickly learn what they can do to earn these approving feelings from their parents. At times, as you grow through your child's education, you may get the impression that others find little to love in your child. Particularly at those times, it is important to give children reassurance that they are loveable. Here are some ways to practice letting your child know your positive feelings:

- give occasional thanks for even ordinary things your child may do to help (clearing the table, getting dressed by him or herself, picking up something you dropped)
- give sincere compliments for real achievements
- tell, write, or draw for your child, a list of things you like about him or her

- listen to your child. Give him or her the chance to communicate with you
- most important, take the time to do things you can enjoy doing together with your child.

Guilt: It is not unusual for any parent to feel guilty for the things he/she has, or has not, done to or for his/her child. Parents of children with special problems often have an extra burden of guilt or need to blame someone for those problems. As you deal with the educational community, you need to lay aside questions of guilt or blame. You need to remember that:

- feeling guilty or making others feel guilty will not help your child

You may need to know whether your child is really handicapped, what exactly the handicap means, perhaps even how your child got that way. You do not need to have someone to blame.

Anger and frustration: As your child grows up, you can expect that there will be times when you are angry or frustrated -- with yourself, with your child, with educators, with others. These emotions can be destructive. But, if you use them, they can be extremely useful.

Here are some ways you can make your anger work for you:

- When you are angriest, write down (in a letter, article, or outline) exactly why you are angry, who you are angry with, and what should be done about it. Don't worry about spelling and grammar; just get it all down. Save this paper. Do not send it to anyone.
- The next day, look at what you have written. Do you know all the information you need to know? Find out who can tell you more. Get the additional information you need.
- Now, you can call the person with whom you are angry. Tell him/her how you feel, why you feel that way. Find out what he/she can and will do. Tell what you plan to do next and when.
- Here are some actions you may consider doing next:
  write letters
  contact other parents
  have a meeting
  contact another official
  plan community action

Your anger will work best for you if:

- you use it responsibly
- you communicate honestly
- you give the other person a chance to save face by doing what you want him/her to do

Chapter 2. Screening

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SCREENING, THE PROCESS

What is it?

Screening is a method of reviewing how children are functioning. It is done to identify those children who need to be evaluated more carefully. Schools use screening procedures to reduce the possibility that children who may need special help will be overlooked.

Screening is not part of the special education process. However, all school districts are required to screen all children to identify those who may need special help.

How is it done?

There are no State or Federal rules governing how screening is to be done. There is a great deal of variation in method from district to district.

The methods used for screening may include one or more of the following:

- asking parents about their children
- sending questionnaires to parents
- observing the child at school (using checklists and scales)
- observing the child at a screening session
- giving formal tests
- reviewing school records

The areas often reviewed in the screening of children include:

- school skills or readiness for school
- motor coordination
- communication -- speech and understanding
- hearing
- sight
- general physical health
- required immunizations
- social functioning
- emotional functioning

When is it done?

Generally, children are formally screened before they enter school for the first time or early in their first year of school.

Many school systems also screen children periodically during their school experience -- for example, they may screen all fourth graders and all eighth graders. It is also common to screen all students who transfer into a school district from another school district. This screening is often a review of school records. It might include a check of vision or hearing.

Informal screening is done constantly by everyone who has contact with children -- parents, doctors, friends, as well as teachers. It is the process of comparing children to each other and to standards in order to catch problems before they become too hard to deal with.

Who does it?

In the schools, informal screening is constantly carried on by:

- teachers
- social workers
- counselors
- and others who have pupil contact

Formal screening may be done by:

- teachers
- parents and volunteers
- aides
- the school nurse
- or others

Some cautions

Screening is not a complete evaluation. It cannot catch all problems. If you think your child needs special help in school, don't wait for the formal screening program to catch it. It is your job to let the schools know your concerns. This handbook will help you through the process.

Sometimes screeners find problems which are not really there. On the day your child was screened, he/she may have been ill, tired, shy, scared, excited, or simply uncooperative. If you think that screeners did not fairly sample your child's behavior, let them know that you think so.

SCREENING, THE PARENTS' ROLE

Notice of intent to screen

There is no legal requirement that parents be informed that screening is going to take place. Most school systems do inform parents when groups of children are being screened. If screening is done individually or as part of classroom activity, you may not be informed that it is happening.

Notice of results

Since there are no legal requirements about screening methods, there is no uniformity about the information you can expect to receive. Some schools inform all parents about the results of screening. Others contact only the parents of children in whom they have noted problems. You may want to find out what your school district's policy is.

If you are notified of problems identified in screening

Be sure you understand what you have been told. What problem has been identified?

Be sure you understand what you should be doing next. Are you being asked to sign something, to contact somebody? Is the school going to take some action? Are you being asked to do something?

If you are being told about a problem, does it make sense to you? Is this something you have noticed or wondered about? Do you have reason to believe that it is not a problem?

Getting more information

If you want more information or want to add information, be sure to contact the school. There may be a specific phone number or name of a contact person on the material you get about the screening. If it is there, use it. If you do not know who to contact, call the school secretary or your local school district administrator's office. Ask whom you can talk to about the screening which was done on your child.

Requesting a screening

If you are concerned that your child has or will have educational problems, you may want to get more information about how your child functions before you request a formal evaluation or additional service. Screening is one way to gather information. You may also want to consider:

- talking to your pediatrician
- talking to your child's teacher
- discussing your suspicions with friends or neighbors who know your child
- talking with a person who has helped children get appropriate services

If you have decided to request a screening, first call your school secretary. Find out if a screening has been done and whether one is planned soon. If a screening has been done, ask to talk to someone who can share the results with you. That person can help you plan what to do next.

HOT TIP!

* Remember, the school secretary is usually an excellent *
* source of information. He/she can get information and *
* direct you to the right people. He/she will be more *
* inclined to help if you can make his/her job more *
* pleasant by remaining friendly and calm, and by making *
* requests rather than demands. *

If no screening has been done, you need to find out whether one is planned. If your concerns are urgent, screening may not be appropriate. You may want to start the evaluation procedures by starting a referral (See Chapter 3) instead.

You will need to know exactly what information you can get from your district's screening. The list on page 27 will help you frame questions to ask. Each district may screen for different problems or abilities. Find out exactly what your district does.

How to prepare for screening

Your school will have specific directions if it is appropriate to prepare your child for screening. They may ask you

to practice some things with your child. For example, you may be asked to familiarize your child with a particular screening procedure, such as the "E" chart commonly used to check vision. If they do, you would be wise to try to follow their directions.

On the other hand, many schools prefer that you do not prepare your child. Coaching children to do well on the test may serve to hide potential problems or increase your child's anxiety about testing. So, unless it is specifically suggested, do not coach your child.

SCREENING, TOOLS

Useful vocabulary

Acuity: keenness, sharpness, sensitivity

auditory acuity: keenness of hearing, ability to hear

visual acuity: the ability to see clearly

Auditory discrimination: The ability to recognize differences and similarities between sounds and words

Auditory memory and comprehension: the ability to remember or understand information that has been heard

Auditory processing: the ability to use the ear and brain to make sense out of what has been heard

Auditory sequencing: remembering the order of items given orally in a list or in order

Cognitive: about mental or intellectual ability, about the ability to learn, reason, understand, or think abstractly

Concept: a general idea or thought

Discrimination: the ability to tell the difference between two objects or sounds, used in visual or auditory discrimination

EPSDT, or Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment: a complete physical screening paid for by the State and available to people who are eligible for medical assistance. Includes a head to toe physical check, vision exam, hearing exam, height, weight and head measurement, blood pressure, dental inspection, nutrition assessment, immunization update, other tests if needed. A copy of the results and a complete explanation of what they mean are given to parents.

Exceptional Educational Need (EEN): handicapping conditions such as vision or hearing problems, physical problems, mental retardation, learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, speech and language problems, or pregnancy requiring special types of teaching in order for the child to benefit from school

Eye hand coordination: the ability of the eyes and hand(s) to work together well. Can the eyes plan where the hands will move?

Fine motor coordination: the use of small muscles for such tasks as writing, speech, or eye movements

Field of vision: the entire area which can be seen without moving the eyes

Gross motor coordination: the ability to use the large muscles of the body effectively for posture, balance and smooth movement.

Motor coordination: the ability of the body's muscles to work together to make complex movements

Motor integration: the ability of parts of the body to work together

Perception: the ability of the brain to correctly interpret the information it receives

Psychomotor: the relationship between the brain and the muscles

Readiness: the physical, mental, and emotional preparedness for an activity.

Tactile: having to do with touch

Visual perception: the ability to interpret correctly what has been seen

Common tests used in screening

Many school districts develop their own screening tools. Standard tests are sometimes used. Examples:

Daberon: A screening tool for four, five and six year olds designed to be a simple means of predicting readiness for school activities. It surveys:

- knowledge of body parts
- color and number concepts
- functional use of prepositions
- plurals
- ability to follow directions
- general knowledge
- visual perception
- gross motor development
- ability to categorize

"Language is the basis of learning; therefore a large portion of the DABERON is devoted to the assessment of language skills."

DIAL (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning):

A screening test for pre-kindergarten children which attempts to identify children with potential learning problems. The following items constitute the DIAL scale:

- gross motor
- fine motor
- concepts
- communication

When you are notified of problems identified in screening

Things to remember:

1) Screening is a review of many children. It is not thorough. You probably know more about how your child functions than the screeners.

2) Screening is not part of the exceptional education process. Your child will not be diagnosed as retarded, learning disabled, physically handicapped, hearing or visually disabled, or speech impaired on the basis of screening alone. However, the school may decide to give your child some special help or extra attention in the classroom before further evaluation.

3) There are no fixed rules about how or when parents are to be involved in screening. Often parents are invited to act as screeners. Usually parents are notified if problems are found. Parents should seek information or find out about results if information is not shared with them.

4) Screening can be carried on by various methods and various people. You may get what feels like the run-around when you try to find out about screening. This may reflect the way the process is organized and not be an attempt to confuse you.

5) During screening any combination of a wide variety of methods may be used. Find out what procedures your school used and what the results indicate.

Things to ask yourself:

1) Did you know about this problem before? Can you help the school understand the problem, what is being done to correct it, or how you are handling it?

2) Did you suspect that this was a problem? Does it make sense to you? Or are you surprised about it?

3) Are you pretty sure that it is not a problem? Can you explain why you disagree with the screening results? Can you explain to the school why you think your child achieved the results they report to you?

4) Do you understand what you are being told? Can you explain to someone else what the problem seems to be?

5) Do you understand what you are supposed to do next?

- you may be asked to check with your pediatrician

- you may be notified of referral to a multidisciplinary team for evaluation (see next Chapter)
- you may be asked to wait for a re-test

6) Do you know who to communicate with in the school? Who is the best contact for you to find out what is happening as the next step?

Things to do:

1) If you receive written notice of problems (either a form or a letter), be sure it includes the name and phone number of the person you should contact. Then save it until the problem is solved or it becomes part of your exceptional education record.

2) If you need to contact someone at school about screening (see Things to ask yourself, and pages 19 - 21), find out who to contact. Look at written material you have received. Other people who might be helpful are the school secretary, your child's teacher, and the school nurse.

3) Ask for repeat testing if results don't make sense to you and/or you know that there were external circumstances which substantially affected them.

4) Follow up sensibly. Let the school know what is being done. Tell them about the results.

5) Find out what kind of records are kept at school about screening and its results. Make sure that your observations and actions are recorded in those records.

6) Do not panic or worry that your child will be "labeled" as a result of screening. It is unlikely that schools will single out your child on the basis of screening alone.

7) Do not assume that the school will "catch" your child's problem. If you are worried about a particular problem, you should act.

- find out if it has been investigated in screening
- decide if you want to refer for exceptional education evaluation (if so, see The Referral Process)
- if you need more information, you may want to talk to your child's teacher, your pediatrician, a school psychologist or social worker, an opthalmologist, optometrist, or audiologist, or an advocate or self-help parents' organization

A review of areas which might be screened

Schools are unlikely to look at all these areas during formal screening. This list is to help you understand what some of the areas mean, common ways of testing them. Since each school system has its own methods of testing, this information should be used only for general information.

Children should have yearly physical examinations from a doctor -- see description of EPSDT in Vocabulary section. page 22. for what a physical might include and how it might serve you.

	Area Tested	Description	Example of test procedure
Physical Health	Growth	Review of the height & weight of child	Nurse, aide or doctor weighs & measures child and compares results to a chart
	Immunizations	Assurance that child's shots conform to state standards	Parents or pediatrician fill out form
Motor Coordination (the ability of the body's muscles to work together)	Gross motor	Big motions: walking, sitting. Use of big muscles	Child is observed walking, running, on a balance beam, at play
	Fine motor	Use of small muscles for writing, speech, eye movements	Child is asked to draw, copy, make a line between two objects, pick up & use small objects
	Eye-hand coordination	Eyes and hands work together	Fine motor tests (see above)
Vision or Sight	Acuity	Ability to see clearly within the normal range	"E" (Snellen) chart or other eye chart
	Tracking	Ability of eyes to move smoothly	Follow a light or pencil tip with eyes
	Visual perception	Ability to understand correctly what is seen	Child is asked to copy a circle, square, triangle
Hearing (skills involved with hearing sounds & understanding them)	Hearing or auditory acuity	Ability to hear sounds within the voice & speech range	Child is tested with an audiometer
	Auditory reception	Understanding what has been heard	Child is asked such questions as, "Do animals have fur?" "Does a fish have fur?"

	Area tested	Description	Example of test procedure
Language (skills involved with speaking, understanding & remembering the spoken word)	Auditory association	Ability to understand relationship between 2 things	Child answer questions such as, "Coffee is hot, ice cream is _____?"
	Paragraph comprehension	Understanding & recalling parts of a spoken story (sequence of events)	Child listens to a short story and is asked questions about the story
	Auditory memory	Remembering what has been heard	Child is given a series of simple directions to follow, asked to repeat a sequence of numbers, or repeat a sentence
	Language development	Ability to use language to express ideas	Child is asked to answer questions about a picture, & the types of word combinations used are noted
	Sequencing (sometimes listed under Cognitive skills)	Ability to put things in a logical order	Child is asked to put a series of pictures in an order that makes sense
	Categories (sometimes listed under Cognitive skills)	Ability to sort items that are alike into a class	Child is asked to put pictures of food & clothing into 2 piles
	Word usage	Understanding word meanings	Child is asked the meanings of simple words and terms
	Prepositions	Understanding words that tell the relation of one thing to another	Child is asked to put an object behind, under, in front of, on, in, next to, etc.
	Plurals	Understanding when words mean more than one object	Child is asked to point to a picture of boys (rather than a boy)
	Social/emotional development	Ability to interact with others	Child is observed playing with other children, or doing an explained activity on his/her own
	General knowledge (general information)	Knowing often-asked information	Child is asked his/her first name, how old he/she is

	Area tested	Description	Example of test procedure
Language (cont'd)	Communication (language development)	Ability to verbally convey ideas	A very broad area in which the child may be asked to repeat sentences, describe pictures, name objects, etc.
	Concepts (sometimes called Academic readiness)	Understanding of general ideas & thoughts	Some tests include this broad category wherein previously described skills such as sorting, colors, counting, and following directions, are tested
	Perceptual skills	Recognizing likenesses & differences, first, last, top, bottom, order of things, etc.	Child looks at several pictures & is asked "which one is not like others?", "which one looks like this one?", "show me the bottom", etc.
	Body images	Knowing the parts of the body	Child is asked to point to body parts: e.g., nose, shoulders, waist
	Colors	Recognizing & naming colors	Child is asked to "point to the blue one", or "what color is this?"
	Number skills	Recognizing & identifying numbers	Child may be asked to count to ten or point to the number eight

Chapter 3. Referral

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REFERRAL, THE PROCESS

What is it?

A referral is a request made of the school system that a child be assessed (looked at closely, tested) to find out whether he/she needs exceptional education to meet his/her special needs. Referral is the very first step toward getting an exceptional education program.

Who can make a referral?

Anyone who has reason to believe that a child may have exceptional educational needs may make a referral. This includes but is not limited to:

- parents
- doctors
- nurses
- social workers
- teachers

Must the child attend public school?

The child does not have to be receiving public education or attending a public school for referral to occur. Referral may occur while your child attends a private school, before your child reaches school age (from birth to five years old), or while your child is excluded from school either for discipline (suspended or expelled) or for health reasons.

How is it done?

Before anyone can make a referral, the parent(s) of the child must be informed. State law specifically requires this. If the referral is made by a school employee, you should receive written notice that the referral is being made. If the referral is made by someone who does not work for the schools, parents may be informed in a face-to-face discussion or over the phone. If a parent makes a referral, he/she is considered to have been informed on the date the referral is made.

Each school district is supposed to have written procedures on how to make a referral. Your district may require that

referrals be made to your school board, your district administrator, your district special education administrator, or your school principal. To find out about those procedures, contact the administrator in charge of exceptional education in your district. If you have trouble locating that person, try the school secretary.

If you are making the referral, it is wise to put the request for evaluation in a letter form. (There is a model you can use on page 41) Be sure you date your letter and keep a copy of it for yourself. It is also wise to ask your school contact to call or write you when they receive your letter. Record that date on the letter so that you will know when the referral request was received. This may help you if the evaluation and placement process takes too long (more than 90 days).

If someone else makes a referral, you should be informed. It is a good idea for you to request a copy of the referral letter.

What you can do to avoid problems

1) Know what kind of referral is made:

Schools may choose to refer your child for evaluation for exceptional educational needs (EEN) or for other needs (non-EEN). If your referral is for EEN, this handbook is designed specifically for you. If the referral is non-EEN, that means that the school suspects your child's educational problems are due to something other than handicapping conditions as defined by law.

Handicapping conditions are:

- mental retardation
- speech and language handicaps
- learning disabilities
- emotional disturbance
- physical handicaps
- pregnancy
- visual handicaps
- hearing handicaps

Some reasons for non-EEN referral include:

- English as a foreign language
- difficulty in adjusting to school
- problems resulting from cultural differences
- danger of dropping out
- reading problems unrelated to handicap

The decision to call a referral non-EEN does affect decisions about who will conduct the evaluation and parental responsibilities. It does not mean that your child's problems will get no attention, or that your child will receive no special help. Many schools have programs besides Exceptional Education which can provide extra help to students who need it. Title I is an example of these extra help programs.

2) Keep track of the date of referral:

Referrals start a chain of events which includes evaluation, planning and placement. According to law, no more than 90 days should occur between referral and the placement offer. Thus, it is important to know when the referral began so that you can keep track of time. (You or the school team may wish to extend the 90 day deadline. This can be done by recieving parental or Department of Public Instruction approval.)

3) Assure that the problem is well defined:

Referral is the first step in getting exceptional education services. If it is found that your child needs such services, that means that your child will be labeled as handicapped, needs to be taught differently than other children, and probably will be in a different classroom for at least part of the school day. This is serious business which can affect how your child behaves and how others treat him/her. Evaluation is also expensive in terms of school costs, your time and feelings, and your child's time and feelings. For these reasons, referrals are best made when the problem is well defined.

Many times, the problem is already well defined -- you may know that your child is hearing impaired, physically handicapped or retarded. Other times, however, referral is made because a teacher or other person finds your child difficult to handle. Then you will want to take a closer look at the reason for referral (the problem) before you or the schools get too involved in evaluation. Some of the tools in Part III of this section will help you do this.

REFERRAL, THE PARENT ROLE

Legal roles:

Referral source: Parents may act as the referral source. That means that they may ask the schools to do an evaluation.

Notification: Parents must be informed before any referral is made. However, referral can be made whether or not the parents approve. Evaluation cannot be carried out without parental consent.

HOT TIP!

* The rule requiring that parents be told about referrals gives an opportunity to avoid problems later. Find out why your child is being referred, what problems are suspected. Add information which you may have. You may be able to help avoid an unnecessary evaluation or to speed up the placement process. *

Other considerations

When you are told that a referral is going to be made, this is the time to start working with the schools. You can ask:

- why the referral is being made
- what will happen next
- what you can do to help
- whom to communicate with

offer:

- to get and give information which you have

request:

- to work closely with the evaluation team
- to assist in the planning of the evaluation

add:

- information you may have to the referral

HOT TIP!

* Remember: The school does not know who you are, how involved you would like to be, how concerned you are, how much you know. Now is the time to let them know how you want to work with them, when and how often you need to be informed about what is happening, and what you want for your child. Starting with an open mind and straight-forward communication can save you trouble later. *

HOT TIP!

* Schools are often unaware that you may have ideas about what should be considered in the evaluation. It is a good idea to ask to be included in the planning session. Do not assume that you will be asked about planning unless you specifically request it. (See the section on Evaluation for more information about planning an evaluation.) You should want to be included in the planning for your own information (so you know what will be happening) and so that you can add information. *

You don't need to go it alone

It is a good idea to think about your needs for friendship, understanding and guidance as you get involved in exceptional education. You will need to use your close friends to share your experiences. In addition, you may need a more formal guide or advocate to help you understand and evaluate what is happening. It is worthwhile to review pages 6 - 10 to be sure you have the support you need.

REFERRAL, TOOLS

Useful vocabulary

EEN (Exceptional Educational Needs): According to Wisconsin law, children with EEN are children who have a handicapping condition such as mental, physical, emotional or learning disability and who require educational services in addition to or instead of those provided as regular education if they are to do their best in school. (The handicapping conditions covered by this definition are specifically defined in the Vocabulary Section of Evaluations.)

Non-EEN: According to law, children who do not fit the above definition may also be assessed for educational needs, but served by other programs than those funded for handicapped children. Most common of these are children who: normally speak some language besides English; children who, for one reason or another, have not had the same types of experiences that other children have had; children who are in danger of failure; who have discipline problems; who are absent a lot; and children who need special programs because they are bright.

Compensatory Education, Title I: Programs for children who do not qualify as handicapped, but may need special help with school.

Questions to ask yourself about a referral for evaluation
(Very important if you were unaware of the problem or surprised by the referral):

1) Do I understand clearly the reason for a referral? (Could I make someone else understand?)

2) Did I think my child had a problem at school? The same one? A different one?

3) Are there things I've noticed at home which make me agree with the referral or disagree with it? List them.

4) Have I already done something or is something planned to address my child's problems? For example, have I been to doctors, clinics, therapists?

5) How does my child get along out of school? Do I or friends do special things to help? Does this child do as well as other children his/her own age?

6) Is there anything I should tell the schools to help them avoid spending extra time and money on evaluation?

Starting off on the right foot

1) Communicate honestly. Every parent has emotions, hopes, hunches, and observations about his/her children. Try to separate feelings, wishes, and what you can see for yourself. Tell these to your school. (See the Child Observation/Communication form, page 42, for help in doing this.)

2) Start an educational file. Keep copies of letters to and from the schools. Keep notes of conferences and important phone conversations. Include the name of the person you talked to, the date, and the important information or decisions.

3) Find out the details of your particular school system's referral and evaluation process. Your school principal or special education director can help you. Find out:

- must the referral be in writing before action can be taken?
- must parents be contacted in writing?
- what had to be done before referral (for example, trying different ways of helping the child learn)
- how specific must the referral be about the child's problem?
- to whom does the referral go?

- what will happen next? (Will you be asked to approve an evaluation? Will there be some informal observation?)
- if you have questions to ask or information to give, who will be able to help you?

4) If something is important, put it in a letter and keep a copy. Use this for information or explanations you want the school to have and to record any important decisions. It does not matter how fancy your letter is, as long as it is clear. (For example, you may return a notice of referral with a note saying, "I have questions about this, please call me at _____.")

5) Learn to ask questions effectively. Find out what is happening, why it is happening, and how it will happen before you agree or disagree. Be sure you understand the answers. Repeat the answers to the person who gave them.

6) You are the <u>most important helper</u> your child has. You can help most if you understand both your child and his/her school program. If you let the school know that your questions and suggestions come from your natural concern for your child and that you want to help them understand and help your child, you are likely to build cooperation.

7) Find someone with whom you can freely talk and share your feelings honestly.

8) Read. Use your library. Learn as much as you can about your child's problem. But do not swallow whole what you read. Books, like the people who write them, might be offering only one side of the story.

9) Stay in close touch with your child's teacher. You need to know about what he/she is doing in the classroom so that, with his/her help, you can follow through at home. Share what you have read with him/her, ask his/her advice and suggestions. Get across the idea that the two of you are a team, working for the same goals. Make your child a part of that team whenever possible. She/he might have some great ideas.

10) Listen to your child. It is his/her own point of view that he/she is giving you, and on that your child is an expert.

11) Work hard to illustrate the idea that differentness is just fine -- not bad. Your child will learn most from your example. Help her/him think of problems as things that can be solved if people work at them together.

Keeping a file

Being able to keep track of your child's educational development is obviously important. It is not enough to try and remember what your child did yesterday, last week, or last year; you should keep a file, which should include the following:

1) A chronological record of doctors, clinics, camps, schools, and other programs your child has attended.

2) Names, addresses, and phone numbers of professionals you have contacted, or to whom you have been referred.

3) Notes on school conferences and meetings attended, including dates, persons present, topics discussed, questions asked and responses received, and decisions made.

4) Notes on phone calls to or from school personnel, including the name of the person you spoke to (you may have to ask, "With whom am I speaking?")

5) Written letters and memoranda that you received and that you sent (make a carbon or a photocopy).

6) Evaluation reports from psychologists, other diagnostic personnel, and clinics, with the date, location and results.

7) Medical records, including dates, locations and physicians' names.

8) Report cards, IEPs and other formal and informal communications from the school, including dates (add dates to informal notes that are undated).

9) Requests you have made to the school (copies of letters or memoranda of telephone conversations), with the date and person contacted, the nature of the request, and action taken.

10) Notes of activities, strategies, and other instructional changes that you are aware teachers have employed, with date started and stopped, and notes on how well they worked.

11) Samples of your child's work, particularly writing samples and art work, with the dates.

12) Developmental worksheet (see page 40).

In order to maintain this file, you will need to get in the habit of keeping notes. Get a notebook with dividers and pockets so you will not lose any small slips of paper. You can label dividers by year with subheadings for the type of item (e.g., report card). This notebook file will be very valuable when you need documentation for your child's need for special services and your reasons for recommending certain educational programs.

Developmental Worksheet
(Often asked questions. Keep this to use in filling out forms.)

Problems at birth:

Natural childbirth?

Caesarian?

Drugs given

APGAR score (if known)

Other problems:

Developmental milestones:

First sat up at age ____

First words at age ____

First step at age ____

Childhood diseases and dates:

Immunizations and dates:

Hospitalizations, dates, and reasons:

Eye exams, dates, doctor, results:

Hearing exams, dates, tester, results:

Other notes:

Sample letter of referral

District Administrator
Address

Dear _____:

I believe my child, _____, birthdate _____, has exceptional educational needs. Therefore, I request from (name of local school district) an assessment of my child's needs, and recommendation for appropriate education placement as provided for in Chapter 115, Wisconsin Statutes. I understand that the law mandates that such services shall be provided by local public school districts for all children ages 3 through 20 years who have exceptional education needs.

For your information, my child's needs have been reviewed by _____. He/she is presently enrolled in _____. I am willing to sign a release of information form in order that you may obtain any records _____ may have.

(Say in your own words why you feel your child appears to need special services: "I think my child ....")

Please notify me as to when I may expect action on my request. I will look forward to receiving your reply.

Sincerely,

(your signature)
(your address)

copy to: Special Education Administrator

Child observation, communication

Here are some things you can observe about your child. If you take time before evaluation starts to jot down your thoughts, you will be better prepared to answer questions and offer information when the evaluation starts.

	What I feel my child can do (at his/her best)	What I wish my child were able to do	Observations or examples of what he/she does
Playing with other children - sports & games - obeying rules - competing - fantasy,pretending - social habits			
Communicating - talking about wants, needs - telling about ideas, asking questions - understanding directions - understanding thoughts or stories			

Academic skills
- groupings (for example, table setting, putting away clothes)
- counting and money
- recognizing words
  - signs
  - reading directions
- fitting things together
  - puzzles
  - models
- learning new things (what does child learn quickly?)
- remembering places, people and things, as well as thoughts
- finding things in space for example, in stores, lost items
- other observations			

Chapter 4. Evaluation

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EVALUATION, THE PROCESS

What is it?

Evaluation for exceptional education is a detailed investigation of a child's functioning to decide whether that child needs special services. Questions asked in an evaluation are:

- does the child have a disability?
- does the disability present a handicapping condition for the child? (some disabilities like nearsightedness, for instance, are so common and so well treated that they are not considered handicapping conditions)
- does the handicapping condition require exceptional education? (some require only medical attention or accesible buildings)
- what services are necessary to help the child do his/her best in school?

Distinction between disability and handicapping condition

During the evaluation process, it is often useful to understand the distinction made in regulations between disability and handicapping condition:

Disability means a condition which creates physical, social, educational, or mental needs.

Handicapping condition means a condition which interferes with the student's ability to profit from education without the addition of special services.

Disability is often, but not always, related to handicapping condition. Asthma might be an example of a disability which presents no educational handicap. Poor motivation might be an example of a handicapping condition which is not necessarily related to a disability.

Evaluation for exceptional education requires that both disability and handicapping condition be found.

Who does it?

Evaluations are carried out by a Multidisciplinary Team, or M-team. Federal rules require that this team include:

- at least one teacher or other specialist in the area of the suspected handicapping condition

State law requires that:

- at least two members of the team be experts in assessing and programming in the suspected area(s) of disability
- at least two members must be employees of the school district where the child lives
- people who are not school employees may serve as:
  consultants (people who give information and opinions but are not team members), or
  team members, if they sign a contract with the school district
- a team assessing a child belonging to a minority shall have the opportunity to consider information given by a member of that minority

HOT TIP!

* Make sure that the M-team has someone on it who is an expert in the area where you think your child has problems. You might not always agree with your school district on what that area is. *

You can request that a certain individual or someone with certain skills be included when you give permission to evaluate. For example, if you suspect your child to have learning disabilities, you will need to see that a specialist in learning disabilities is on the M-team, even if the school district suspects another disability, such as mental retardation or emotional disturbance.

Some M-teams are large; others have only two or three members. Typical M-teams include some of the following people:

- special education teacher(s)
- school psychologist
- school social worker
- speech and language therapist
- occupational or physical therapist
- school principal or other administrator
- reading specialist
- school nurse
- classroom teacher(s)

How is it done?

Details of the evaluation process vary from district to district. But the evaluation will probably have these steps:

1) Evaluation cannot take place without the parent or guardian's approval. You will probably receive a form which you are asked to sign and return. (If you do not give your approval for evaluation on this form, someone from your school district will probably contact you to find out why you chose to withhold your approval.)

2) The district special education administrator or the person who receives your approval will appoint members of the team which will evaluate your child. Usually a team leader, coordinator or manager will be appointed at that time. That person will be responsible for gathering records, calling meetings and making the reports.

3) The coordinator gathers what information he/she has (and often makes first contact with the parents to get whatever you can add to that information) and tries to understand it.

4) A first M-team meeting is called at which:

   - available information is reviewed, and
   - members plan what additional information they will need

5) Each member of the team does his/her own evaluation.

6) Team members often share their results informally.

7) Team meets to report to each other what they found, identify a disability, decide whether or not it is a educational handicap, set goals, and recommend a program. (This may happen in one or more meetings.)

When is it done?

A full evaluation must take place and placement notice be given within 90 days of the day the school receives the referral unless:

- the parents do not give their approval for the evaluation to start
- the parents or the State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction agree that a longer time is needed.

After the first evaluation is done, a complete evaluation must be repeated every three years. Evaluation may be done more often if parents or school people request it.

What is it good for?

An evaluation can be an important adventure. It is a time:

- to look at each child as an individual
- to review what the child has been able to do
- to look at ways the child can learn best
- to plan ways to overcome problems or handle difficulties
- to take a look into the future
- to take a fresh look at the child's progress

It is a time to look at past successes and to plan the future. It provides the foundation on which to construct an educational plan.

What to watch out for

1) The people who make up the evaluation team will look at your child in terms of their own knowledge and training. It is important to know who is on the team and what they will be looking for.

2) Part of the evaluation process includes testing your child. People who do testing and observation sometimes forget to be very certain they are using tests which allow the child to do as well as he/she can. They need to be reminded, in these cases, to compare test results with what they can see the child is able to do.

3) Because the law talks about "disability" and "handicap", people often forget to look at how a child learns best and what his/her strong points are.

4) Program and placement recommendations should reflect the strengths and problems identified. Do they grow out of the study of your child? Or do you suspect that they are made mainly on the basis of what is readily available in your school district?

About labels

The first steps in evaluation require that the M-team defines your child's disability and handicapping condition. This involves

matching your child's abilities and needs to those listed for certain categories of need listed in the rules and regulations implementing the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. (You can get a copy of these from your school district or the Department of Public Instruction.) The result is that, if your child falls into a category such as mentally retarded, learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, speech or language impaired or physically handicapped, he/she is eligible to receive extra services funded largely by federal and state money.

Since the rules for defining categories and labeling children are more specific in the law than the methods for deciding what services to provide, some M-teams fail to go beyond the labeling step. Parents need to remember that a label does not tell:

- what a child should be taught
- how he/she learns best
- which class or program can meet his/her needs

Most students receiving exceptional education will be served in programs for children identified in their category. But some children are better served in different categories or mixed programs. Remember, the label does not, in itself, tell how best to educate your child. Be very sure that the "evaluation" does not end with the label.

No caring person takes labels lightly. What you call a person affects how you act towards him/her and how that person acts. A well-applied label can give parents direction in their reading, understanding and expectations for their child. A misapplied one can create frustratingly high or low expectations, damage a student's self-image, and affect how that student learns and behaves.

Few people -- professionals or others -- will be comfortable labelling your child like a can of peas. But if they can't get help without it, you need to encourage them to find the most appropriate label -- and then turn their attention to your child and her/his individual needs.

A word about individualized educational programs

The Federal law requires that an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) be developed before a placement is made. Up until September, 1980, Wisconsin has required that these plans be made after placement so that they reflect a teaching plan. After

September 1980, these plans will be made according to the Federal requirements. Since the new procedures are being developed in Wisconsin, parents need to know that IEPs may be prepared at the final M-team meeting. Each time you are invited to attend a meeting, find out what the meeting is for so that you can prepare for it.

EVALUATION, THE PARENT ROLE

Legal requirements

The law specifically requires that parents be involved in two ways:

- they must give approval before evaluation takes place
- they must be notified of the results of the Multi-disciplinary Team evaluation

State law suggests that parents be given every opportunity to be involved in the evaluation process.

The notice you receive should include:

- the reasons why the school wishes to conduct an evaluation
- a description of the procedures, tests, records or reports used as a basis for referral
- a general description of what will be done
- an explanation of your rights with regard to giving consent

Reasons to get as involved as possible

Because you have known your child all of his/her life, you have a special view of your child. Because you have great responsibilities and special feelings for your children, you have a special point of view which is important for evaluations. Areas in which you can make a special contribution include these:

- You have watched your child from the time she/he was born. Other people can measure progress in terms of what other children do. You are better at measuring progress against the past. Has your child taken giant steps forward? Is he/she on a plateau?
- You have the best idea of how your child functions away from school, what special things she/he does or needs to learn to function in the community.
- You understand what ideas your child brings home from school, which ideas he/she uses, and how well he/she understands them.
- You care for your child in a special way. Your need to see your child make progress is greater than anyone else's.
- You have your own special set of values. Some people put greater emphasis on being able to earn a living, others emphasize personal happiness. Some are more comfortable if their children are taught to "fit in" socially, others prefer school to stick to academic things. You can help the school understand what is important in your family.

Some ways to be involved

There are many different ways you can be involved in an evaluation. The ways you choose will depend upon:

- your experience with the school's M-team
- how comfortable you are about your own skill
- how much time you have
- how willing the M-team is to involve you

Ways to be involved include:

- listening, asking questions and understanding explanations of what was done and why
- offering observations which support or might change the M-team recommendations
- helping to plan the evaluation
- doing part of the evaluation

You don't have to pick just one way to be involved and never change. Many parents are more comfortable getting a good understanding at first and becoming more active later on.

Specific steps toward parent involvement

1) When asked for approval for evaluation tell the schools that you want to be involved from the start. Use positive words (I am eager to help..." "I look forward to planning with you...")

2) If you plan to have a friend or advocate go to meetings with you, let the M-team coordinator know ahead of time.

3) Make a list of questions you would like to see the M-team answer. Share it with the M-team.

4) Make a list of things you know about your child which are important to her/his education. Share the list with the M-team. (See page 42 for sample observations.)

5) Find out what tests and observations are going to be used. Find out what these will tell you about your child.

6) Ask for suggestions about preparing your child for testing. Even test-wise people get nervous about testing.

7) Plan and do your own observation of your child's skills in areas which are to be tested and areas which are important to you. Share these with the M-team (see pages 42 and 70).

8) Check the results of M-team observations and their conclusions against what you know. Do the results of individual tests sound right for your child? Does the general picture of the child described in evaluation match your own feelings about her/his ability?

9) Supply information which the school does not have.

10) Help to define your child's abilities as well as his/her disabilities.

Pointers for parents attending a parent-teacher conference.*

There are ways that you can work with your child's school so that your child can get the education that is best for him/her.

1) You can ask your child's teacher to have a conference with you, just as he/she or the principal can ask you to attend a conference about your child. The conference should be at a time and place that is convenient for all of you.

2) Prepare yourself in advance for the conference. Ask your child how she/he feels; look over his/her school work. Practice saying what you want to say. If you think the school is planning to move your child to a different class, ask the principal if you can visit the other classroom or special programs to see if you think your child belongs there.

3) Two heads are better than one: bring along your spouse or a friend to any meeting or conference you attend regarding your child. Your friend can help you decide what was actually said by the group and help you get your own feelings across.

4) Find out what is to be discussed at the meeting (the agenda).

5) Write down a list of things you want to discuss. Bring the list with you to the meeting.

6) If you are confused by what the teacher, the psychologist, or anyone at the conference is saying, ask them to explain so that you can understand.

* Adapted from: Markel, G., et al. "Assertive Training for Parents of Exceptional Children", April 1976, a paper presented at the Annual International Convention, The Council for Exceptional Children.

7) If someone asks you questions about your home life, she/he should explain why this information is needed. Answer only those questions you feel are appropriate.

8) It is important to find out from the teacher what strengths and assets he/she sees in your child as well as what weaknesses and deficits may need attention. You too should write down your child's strengths and good points, as well as the things you are concerned about. This will help your child find activities in which she/he can feel successful.

9) At the end of the conference, make sure that:

- the teacher has told you what he/she proposes to do to help your child in school
- you have told the teacher what you propose to do to help at home
- you have set up another appointment to see how your child progresses.

10) Be sure to follow through with any plan you and the teacher have agreed on. Write a checklist for yourself during the conference or schedule important dates on a calendar.

11) Remember, you have a right to speak up if you do not feel the recommended plan or special program is a good one for your child. Ask for another conference to review the situation.

12) Be involved with the school and its personnel on an informal basis so that they are acquainted with a person, a helpful human being -- not only a person standing up for one's rights. It is important to maintain a good relationship between the individuals involved in your child's school life.

Your signature

In the course of your experience with special education, you may be asked to sign various forms. Your signature will typically mean one of several things:

1) The signature may show that a report was discussed with you. M-team evaluations are likely to have this kind of signature. Make sure you understand the nature of the report you are signing.

2) The signature may show that you were given the chance to help write the report. Individualized Educational Plans

use signatures to show this. Make sure your ideas or opinions are found in the report you sign, if the signature shows participation. You can usually add your own ideas if they are not accurately stated in the report or are hard to find.

3) The signature may show that you agree with or approve of a report or action. Your approval of evaluation and approval of placement (see section on Placement) forms require such signatures. Before you sign anything:

- find out what your signature means
- take the time to decide whether to sign it
- know that you do not have to sign anything "at the meeting". Most people will encourage you to read over any paper at your own pace in order to decide whether to sign it.

School records

During an evaluation you may find it helpful to review your child's school records. Each school district makes rules about:

- what is in pupil records
- how long they are kept
- who may see them

Your school may distinguish between behavioral records which include psychological tests, observations, notes about behavior, and other records which are not progress reports; and progress reports which include grades and classroom assignments and other reports which show student progress.

Schools must destroy behavioral records one year from the end of the student's attendance unless the pupil (or his/her parent or guardian) allows them to be kept for a longer period.

As a parent you have the right to:

- be told your school district's rules about school records
- look at your child's records
- copy and keep those records at no or low expense

Often the school district will make sure a school employee is there to help you understand the record if you are having trouble. This is a common policy.

Why you might look at your child's records

1) They can help you understand how the school looks at your child.

2) You might want to be sure that they do not give the wrong impression about you or your child.

3) You might want to review past experiences in order to judge the present.

4) You might want to see whether a specific test was done, so you could use the results or avoid repeating it.

5) You might want to correct or add information.

Why you might request an evaluation

Complete evaluations must be done every three years. They may be done more often, sometimes at the request of the parent. Here are some good reasons why you might consider asking for an evaluation:

1) Something has changed dramatically in your child's life since the last evaluation.

2) The results of the last evaluation were unclear.

3) The child is young and may change rapidly over a year.

4) You have moved and you think that the new school district needs to do its own evaluation.

5) You cannot make sense of your child's school progress based on your understanding of the last evaluation.

Making sense out of confusing information

Sometimes you get too many opinions about your child. Different professionals give you different advice. It gets so confusing that you hear but don't understand why people can say so many different things.

When you get confusing or conflicting advice, remember that you, too, are an "expert" when it comes to your child. No one knows your child as well as you do. You have the best chance

of making sense of confusing information, evaluations, and suggestions. Here's a plan to start:

1) During meetings try to write down as much as you can: what each professional advisor believes, why he believes it, what you should do about it.

2) Ask questions. Ask until you understand, then check with the professional to make sure you understood correctly.

3) Write down your own opinions.

4) Where is there agreement? Do you see a pattern of similarities and differences?

5) You can now decide if you have enough information, or what additional help you need. (You may want help in deciding. Use a good friend, a member of a parents' group, or some advocate you can trust.)

   If you decide you need more information, you need to be honest with yourself: Are you "shopping" for an answer you like? Or are you filling in gaps in the evaluation?

6) When you have an evaluation which you can accept, consider the choices for what to do next.

HOT TIP!

* Don't forget that it is your child at the center of all this planning. Of course, you want to do everything possible for your child, but remember that he/she might get tired or overloaded. When you plan your child's program, decide what is most important and give your energy to that. *

Independent Educational Evaluations

According to the law, parents have a right to get an independent educational evaluation. This means that a qualified evaluator who is not employed by the schools may provide a report which must be considered by the schools.

If you want to have an independent evaluation done because you disagree with the school district evaluation or think that it was not done well, the school district may pay for an inde-

pendent evaluation. (The school system may challenge this right on the grounds that their evaluators did a thorough job.)

HOT TIP!

* If you expect your school district to pay for an evaluation, it is wise to inform them before you arrange for the evaluation. Find out their criteria for independent evaluations. This will help both you and your district avoid misunderstandings. *

If you do not need to have the school system pay, if you just want another opinion about your child, you can get an independent evaluation at your own expense. The school district must consider the report, if you ask them to.

Where to get an independent evaluation

Your school district should be able to tell you some places to get independent evaluations. There are some private schools and tutors who provide this service. The university system is also a good source to explore. Parents and parent groups can help you locate qualified evaluators. Many of the Disability groups listed in the back of this handbook can help you locate people who can do independent evaluations.

EVALUATION, TOOLS

Vocabulary: Diagnostic terms

Emotional disturbance: A classification for children who have emotional, social or behavior problems which greatly interfere with education.

Hearing impairment or handicap: A difficulty in hearing which is not temporary and at least creates difficulty in understanding conversational speech as it takes place in a group.

Learning disabiliites: Problems in learning unexplained by other disabilities and usually distinguished by an uneven learning pattern. You often hear terms like dyslexia (the inability to read), dysgraphia (the inability to write), or minimal brain injury related to learning disabilities. The state has a formula which districts use to determine the existence of learning disabilities. This formula is being revised and will probably be changed in Spring of 1981. If the exact definition of learning disabilities is an issue for you, you will want to understand the specific criteria. Get them from your school district or the Department of Public Instruction.

Mild (or educable) mental retardation: The least serious category of mental retardation, generally describes a condition of people who will be able to learn basic academic skills with much extra help.

Moderate (or trainable) mental retardation: A middle range of mental retardation. Typical long-term goals for students with moderate retardation include group home or somewhat sheltered living and a minimally competitive job.

Physically handicapped: A physical problem such as heart disease, deformities, or spasticity which affects normal development. In Wisconsin, children who require only the addition of physical or occupational therapy and no other educational modification are not considered to have exceptional educational needs.

Speech and language handicaps: Problems resulting in delay or an unusual pattern of learning to speak and understand language.

Severe (and profound) mental retardation: Significant limitation of mental functioning. With present educational techniques, typical goals for students in these categories include establishing basic self-care skills.

Visual handicap: Difficulty in seeing and using the eyes effectively. The extent of problem is specifically defined by law and determined by an ophthalmologist (eye doctor) or optometrist.

Vocabulary: Selected testing terms*

Affective domain: Those behaviors commonly thought of as emotions. Terms often used to describe behavior in this domain are feelings, attitudes, interests, appreciation, beliefs, and values.

Aptitude: That combination of characteristics, both inherited and learned, which indicate the capacity of a person to learn some skill or subject matter after training; usually, but not necessarily, implies intellectual or skill aspects rather than emotional or personality characteristics.

Average: A general term for a description of a middle group; most commonly used in testing are the mean, median, and mode.

Chronological age: A person's actual age, i.e., the length of time he has lived, used to determine intelligence quotients and as a factor to consider when interpreting certain types of scores, especially age-related scores.

Cognitive domain: Refers to intellectual area or ability.

Correlation: The tendency for two or more items to change values in relation to each other. CAUTION: correlation does not necessarily mean that one item affects or causes the other.

Criterion: A standard against which a test may be validated or checked. A grade-point average is an obvious criterion for a scholastic aptitude test.

Diagnostic test: A test designed to define specific educational and study difficulties. Also, a test given in connection with counseling as an aid to diagnosing a problem.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ): The number obtained by dividing mental age by chronological age and multiplying the result by 100. A child with a mental age of five years who is ten years old has an IQ of 50.

Mean: The total of all scores divided by the number of different scores; an average.

* Adapted from Parents' Guide to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, Public Law 94-142. Compiled by: Richard E. Head, Coordinator, Advocacy Program, United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Kansas City, Inc.

Median: The midpoint of a group of scores. That score above which half of the scores fall and below which half of the scores fall.

Mental age: A term used to express the results of some intelligence tests. A mental age of 12 years indicates a 12 year old would be expected to perform that way on that particular test -- not necessarily that the child is like a 12 year old.

Mode: The score that occurs the most frequently in a group of scores.

N: Symbol used to represent the number of persons taking a test or the number of scores being examined.

Norm: A standard or model regarded as typical.

Objective test: A test which is scored in such a way that no matter who scores it, the results are the same. Scoring keys are used.

Performance test: An ambiguous term used to mean: 1) a test involving special apparatus, as opposed to a paper-and-pencil test; or 2) a test minimizing verbal skills; or 3) a work-sample test.

Profile: A graph of the performance of an individual on a series of tests, especially the sub-tests in a larger test.

Psychomotor: Muscular action resulting from conscious mental activity. An example of psychomotor activity is tracing a triangle on a piece of paper. Eye-hand coordination is another expression for psychomotor activity.

Raw score: The basic score obtained from scoring a test according to directions given by the test maker. This is often equal to the number of correct answers.

Subjective test: Test that is often scored on the basis of attitudes, opinions, and idiosyncracies of the scorer. The essay test is an example. Different scorers get different results.

Variable: Any trait or characteristic which may change with the individual or the observation. Anything being tested.

This list is very general. In an evaluation report you receive about your child there may be terms not listed here which you do not fully understand. By law you are entitled to a full explanation of the evaluation including the meaning of any terms or phrases which you do not understand. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Until you are sure you understand the answer, keep asking the question.

Who's who in exceptional education

The exceptional (or special) education director is the administrative leader in the district, responsible for all exceptional educational services. His/her role is to provide an organization in which exceptional education leadership can be provided to plan, develop, implement and evaluate appropriate exceptional education. He/she has the responsibility of seeing that programs are offered to meet children's needs. He/she is the one to talk to when you are unsure that your district can serve your child well with its programs or when you have suggestions which might affect the whole district.

The school principal is responsible for what goes on in the school building. Within his budget of money and people, he/she can make class assignments, give teachers assignments, attend to matters of school maintenance (cleaning and fixing dangerous areas), and help with student problems. He/she is responsible to the district administrator for the running of the school and would be a good person to use in communicating with the district administrator.

School psychologists do the psychological testing done in schools. They also counsel school children and their families and work with teachers and other school staff to improve the child's ability to function within the school system.

School nurses are trained to recognize emergency situations, treat minor emergency problems, and make sure children are complying with a prescribed medication, diet or rest regimen. In addition, the school nurse may be consulted by parents or teachers to help determine if there is evidence for physical problems underlying school performance problems.

Speech and language therapists are trained in the study of human communication, its normal development, and its disorders. They evaluate children's ability to understand and use speech and language and assist in treating whatever problems exist. Their concerns include clarity of speech and use of speech to communicate ideas.

Occupational therapists build or rehabilitate the basic skills involved in everyday living by developing treatment activities and by changing commonly used items to suit the special needs of the disabled person. Treatment focuses on fine motor skills, especially the use of hands and fingers; on coordination of movement; and on self-help skills.

Physical therapists treat children who need to work on fundamental body movements. Treatment focuses on large muscle and gross motor activities (like walking, throwing, etc.), balance,

and understanding how to use the body.

School social workers may be consulted when a child is experiencing long-standing educational, social or attendance problems. They typically provide a link between the home, the school and community resources. On an M-team the psychologist usually does testing, the social worker contributes a home study and observations about how the child interacts with other children and adults. Either might provide counseling depending on the need, and their schedules, interests and skills.

Counselors are trained to help students plan their school and vocational programs. They are usually available at the secondary or high school levels. They can help a student get into the most appropriate courses and help plan for what a student will do after high school.

About tests

There are a great many tests which are available to help with the evaluation of children's educational needs. Just which of these tests applies to your child has to do with which ones the tester is familiar with as well as his/her assessment of the way your child can perform.

When you are present at the planning of testing or receiving test results, here are some things to think about:

1) Tests are important because they represent a sample of behavior. There is nothing magical about the specific items tested.

2) The tester ought to pay as much, or more attention to how a child solves a problem (guessing, remembering, or figuring out) as to the correctness of the answers. Patterns of mistakes, for example, can tell us about what or how a child needs to learn. A number cannot.

3) The scoring of many tests is somewhat arbitrary. Sometimes one or two questions can make a big difference in the score if a test has few items or a child scores on the border between two categories.

4) Many people believe that IQ (intelligence quotient) is an inborn characteristic which is permanent and unchangeable. They believe that once a child achieves a particular score, this score is her/his for life, once and forevermore. These beliefs are mistaken. The IQ is simply a way of expressing a score on a particular test which is called an intelligence test.

5) Many tests are not appropriate for minority children or children who do not speak English at home. This does not mean that these children should not be tested, rather it means that care needs to be taken to prevent discrimination.

6) It is both illegal and unwise to judge a child on the basis of one test alone. More than one piece of evidence is needed to show the need for exceptional education.

7) There are ways other than formal tests to assess a child's abilities and performance. See page 66 for some other ways of assessing educational need.

Questions to ask about tests

Here are three questions you can and should ask about any test results:

1) What does this test tell you about my child? This is the most important question to ask about any test, observations, or other evaluation results.

2) How can or will the schools or teachers use the test results?

3) (Ask yourself): Do I recognize my child in these results? Do they fairly represent my child? If the results sound like your child, let the M-team know. If you think the test results do not represent your child as you know her/him, try to pinpoint what you see differently and ask the M-team to help you figure out why your feelings are so different from theirs.

Here is a series of more technical questions about tests. It is sometimes helpful to remind an M-team of some of the difficulties tests present. Tests are not perfect. Sometimes you might want to ask some more technical questions to help you understand the results more clearly. Situations which may point to the need to ask more questions include:

- you think the M-team is so impressed with test results that they don't think about what they and you know about the child from everyday experience

- you are confused by what the test seems to say about your child and need to know more about the test to understand why

- you really have reason to wonder if the tester chose his/her tests well

- you are simply curious

Technical questions can sometimes disturb M-team members. Let people know why you are interested. Use tact, but remember that you have the right to ask any question. Then, really listen to and understand the answers. Question until you get an answer you understand. Here are some technical questions you may want to ask:

1) When was the test most recently revised? Are the content and vocabulary up-to-date? Or does it use old-fashioned words like "button hook" and "davenport"?

2) How was validity measured? That is, how does one know that the test does what it says it does?

3) What, exactly, does the test predict? (IQ, for example, is often a predictor of grades in school, not of intelligence or success in life.)

4) How reliable are the results? That is, will one person get a particular score no matter when she/he takes the test, who scores it, or who gives it?

5) Are there ways the test discriminates against certain disabilities? Does it rely on reading, language, motor coordination (writing or drawing), or speed of response?

6) For what group was the test standardized? Does it judge your child against New York City school children, against only children with handicaps, against children in your state or school district?

Some ways of assessing children

Standardized tests provide one set of tools which are commonly used in evaluations. They typically allow the tester to collect a sample of work or behavior and compare it to that of a large group of individuals (if they are norm-referenced), or to a standard of achievement (if they are criterion-referenced).

There are other ways of assessing children's abilities. Some of these are:

Curriculum-based assessment: comparison of the knowledge and skills a child has to those necessary for what is to be taught. The focus is on what the child has learned and what needs to be taught.

Diagnostic teaching: teaching experiences designed to assess a child's areas of strength and weakness. This may include assigning tasks which require specific kinds of activities (large or small motor, verbal or nonverbal, memory, thinking), giving instructions in a variety of ways, observing individual and group behavior.

Environmental or functional assessment: comparison of what the student knows with what she/he needs to know in order to function as independently as she/he can. This kind of assessment revolves around the choice of an ambitious, but realistic goal for the student, the listing of all the skills necessary to reach that goal, and determination of the student's progress towards it.

Some common tests

The following are the names of some commonly used tests. This is not a complete list of tests. Nor is it a recommendation for any test over any other. These are simply a sample of names you may hear.

If you want to know more about a particular test, use the Mental Measurements Yearbook in your public library. This publication critically reviews both new and traditional testing instruments.

Intelligence scales generally predict success in school, often called IQ or Intelligence Quotient.

Cattell Infant Intelligence Scale (known as the Cattell) gives a single IQ score for children between 3 and 30 months.

Leiter International Performance Scale is a language-free test which gives an IQ equivalent for children between the ages of two and eighteen

Raven Progressive Matrices: a non-verbal test to tap intelligence by requiring that the subject solve problems

Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (often called the Binet): a scale for use with people aged two and over which estimates intelligence with a single score. This test is considered to be highly dependent on verbal ability.

Wechsler Intelligence Scales: tests which give not only a general intelligence score but also separate verbal and performance scores which can each be divided into sub-sections for detailed examination of a profile:

WPPSI: Wechsler PreSchool and Primary Scales of Intelligence (pronounced "wipsey") for children aged four to six months

WISC or WISC-R: (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (pronounced "wisk" or "wisker") for children aged five years to fifteen years eleven months

WAIS: Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (pronounced "wais") for people sixteen years or over

Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities: The ITPA gives information about how individuals receive, understand and express ideas, as well as grammar and memory processes.

Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitudes: tests for items such as pictorial and verbal absurdities, motor speed, auditory attention span, social adjustment, orientation, free association, number ability, ability to follow oral directions -- thought to be necessary to daily classroom performance.

Beery-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration (VMI): gives a good approximation of the visual-motor developmental level of the child, which is related to reading readiness.

Bender Visual-Motor Gestalt Test: estimates the visual-motor development of the child; such development is seen as parallel to mental development and as associated with language ability. This test consists of nine designs which the child is asked to copy.

Wepman Test of Auditory Discrimination: tests the child's abilities to discriminate between the "fine" sounds of the English language, like T and D.

Achievement -- tests of what the child has learned

The Wide Range Achievement Test (pronounced "rat"): the subtests cover oral reading, spelling and arithmetic computation. The test encompasses kindergarten through college levels.

Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT) (pronounced "pee yat"): measures what an individual has learned in five basic areas: word pronunciation, reading comprehension, arithmetic, spelling and general information. This achievement test has multiple choice answers.

Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty: this instrument diagnoses reading disabilities at three levels: non-reader or primer, primary, and intermediate grade levels. The areas covered by the subtests are: oral reading, silent reading, listening comprehension and others.

Gray Oral Reading Tests: a verbal test, wherein the child reads paragraphs while the tester notes the different kinds of errors made.

Oseretsky Tests of Motor Proficiency: Useful in evaluating a child's manual ability, skill and motor equilibrium. For children ages four to fourteen.

Purdue Perceptual Motor Survey: rates perceptual-motor development for children aged six to nine years, although the scale may be used, with modifications, for both younger and older children. The areas of perceptual-motor development encompassed by the scale are: balance and postural flexibility, body image and differentiation, perceptual-motor match, eye control and form perception.

Gesell Developmental Schedules: tests the pre-school child in the areas of motor development, adaptive behavior, language development, and social behavior.

Harris Tests of Lateral Dominance: requires the judgment of the examiner, as it is a combination of tests that test for lateral dominance (i.e., handedness). It is important in screening for maturational lag.

Social-Emotional

Vineland Social Maturity Scales: a checklist designed to measure competency from infancy to adulthood in areas such as growth (both improvement and deterioration), social education, vocational and educational guidance.

Goodenough-Harris Drawing Test: this is a nonverbal test which is scored on the basis of the child's drawings.

Thematic Apperception Test (TAT): a set of picture cards about which the child or adult is asked to tell a story, which is analyzed for dominant drives, emotions, sentiments, complexes, and conflicts reflected in it.

Observing your child

Your observations from home can be used in evaluations. They are important because they help school people understand what your child is like in the community. They also help you react to other people's observations. Here are some areas which you can observe at home:

- using academic skills in daily life: reading signs, comics, TV ads, counting squares on board games, making change
- memory (for directions, of events): short-term (directions, requests), long-term (what happened last week, where specific items are in the supermarket)
- movement: smoothness, handedness, favoring one side, grace
- social skills: play (alone or with others, fantasy, sports), independence (at play, in the community), cooperation
- language: understanding, length of things said, form (words, sentences, questions)
- self-care skills: personal care (washing, dressing) household chores

How to observe well

If you want to communicate your observations to teachers or others, it helps to have some written record. Here are a number of ways you might record your observations:

1) For behavior you hope to change, decide exactly what you want to observe and how you know it is happening. (For example, aggression - hits another child; or memory - remembers a request long enough to fill it.):

   Keep a paper handy on which you record how often, when (the time), and for how long the behavior occurred. Also record what happens when the behavior starts and what happens when it stops.

   Example of observation of behavior for change: Behavior: (stated in terms of actions, what the child does - for example, "child pulls Mom's hair"; not "child is angry at Mom")

Observations:

date	time: started	stopped	what happened just before	what happened when behavior stopped
12/7/8_	4:45	4:47	Mom refused to give child additional snack	Dad came home

2) For a language sample (if language is being assessed):

Write down as exactly as you can a conversation you (or someone else) hold with your child. After school or bedtime are often good times for this. You may use a recorder.

3) Random observations of behavior:

Observe what your child is doing at intervals during the time he/she is home (every 15 minutes, or every hour, for example). Write down what he/she is doing, with whom, how he/she is doing it and anything that seems important about it to you.

4) Significant events:

Before an evaluation (and during it) you are often acutely aware of your child's behavior -- the wonderful and the not so wonderful. It is useful to keep a log of your observations so that you can remember them later.

Example of random observation log or significant event log:

date	time	what child is doing	with whom	comments
12/7/8_	4:30	listening to record, head close to speaker	alone	unaware of others in room

About professionals

As you work through evaluations you will deal with professional people -- teachers, psychologists, doctors, therapists. Many of these people have years of education and experience. But this simply means they have learned certain technical skills and words which are used in their own field, as well as a set of values about how they use their skills. In dealing with exceptional education evaluations and programs, parents work with professionals. Parents can work best if they are not intimidated by professionals. When you work with professionals, here are a few things to remember:

1) There is no such thing as a "dumb question". A good professional should be able to explain to you what he/she did (or plans to do), why he/she did it, what he/she found out, and what it means to him/her.

2) Professionals may be very familiar with some technical area, but when it comes to your child, you are the best expert available.

3) Anyone who puts a lot of time and years into learning and doing a job wants to be appreciated. Understand that the M-team is a group of resource people which you can use for your child's benefit. Find out what they know and use their knowledge. In doing so, you are complimenting them.

4) In the last resort, professionals are human -- they will sometimes make mistakes, they have bad days, they may "take to" you or your child or not. It helps them if you can be pleasant and understanding.

5) Remember that your M-team meeting is undoubtedly more important to you than to them. You attend evaluations rarely, they do so daily or more often. It is their job. If they were as highly involved in each conference as you are, they would be nervous wrecks. Thus, the professional may seem very casual to you. You can understand why, but you don't have to be so understanding that you forget to use their skills for your child. Ask your questions and use their knowledge anyway.

Chapter 5. Individualized Educational Plan for Placement

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INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR PLACEMENT, THE PROCESS

What is it?

An Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is the core of special education. The reason for doing an evaluation should be the development of such a plan. In its simplest form, it should represent a plan for what to teach and how to teach your child. It must account for his/her particular abilities, what he/she already knows, what he/she needs to learn, and how you will know if he/she learned it.

When is it done?

An IEP is the logical end product of a careful evaluation. According to Federal law it must be completed before placement. (If you are used to IEPs prepared within six weeks after placement, those were following State regulations. Now the State is requiring a plan to be completed before placement.) We will call this a placement plan. It must be reviewed and changed as needed each year.

The State has not stopped requiring an instructional plan to be done after placement. This is discussed in the chapter entitled IEP for Instruction.

Who does it?

The following people need to be present to write the first placement plan:

- one or both parents (or guardians)
- the child, if appropriate
- a representative of the public school who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education in the area of suspected disability
- the child's teacher
- a member of the evaluation team who is knowledgeable about the results of the child's evaluation
- any other individual such as an advocate whom the parents or the school feel is important to the best interests of the child

What is it good for?

Your child's individualized educational plan can be an exciting document. It can, and should, have many uses:

- it provides information about who should teach your child and in what kind of class
- it can help a teacher decide what to teach and how to teach it
- it gives parents a chance to participate in the educational planning for their child
- it is a chance for parents to understand what is being taught and how
- it helps your school district plan how to use its resources
- it can help you and your school judge the progress your child has made
- it provides a basis for coordinating the child's program at school and at home

How is it done?

Typically, the IEP is written at a meeting or a series of meetings. Many parents feel that they are at a disadvantage if the teacher comes to the IEP meeting with a written plan. However, experience has shown that it is helpful to have a working paper so things can be accomplished in a meeting.

Always consider an IEP developed by someone else without consulting you as a first attempt. You can work on it together and bring it home to think about its contents. You will probably need to change it before you sign it.

HOT TIP!

* You can come to an IEP meeting with your own plan *
* written out if you want to. Most parents find it *
* helpful to come with a list of goals which are *
* important to them. (See page 83 for a model IEP *
* which you could use.) *

Your role in the process

1) School officials naturally think about the resources (classes and time) they have available when they are planning. You

can see that the planning suits your child's particular needs, not just the school's program. Your child has a right to what she/he needs, not just what is available.

2) Some academic publishers have lists of typical goals and objectives to help teachers make IEPs. Your job is to be sure that your child's individual goals make sense in terms of what she/he can do and the information you get in the evaluation.

3) Some goals get stated so generally that you won't know if progress is made. "To improve reading ability" is too general a goal. Get it stated in terms of expected reading level (grade equivalent) or specific skills to be learned.

4) Some IEPs state goals only in terms of what the teacher will do, not what the child is expected to learn. You need to help make the IEP a plan to teach your child, not just to fill teacher time.

5) IEPs must show how you will assess progress periodically. You need to make sure that the criteria specified make sense.

6) An IEP cannot be considered good if it is not used. Too much detail may encourage teachers to file and forget the IEP. Try to get a document <u>you</u> will want to look at occasionally during the school year.

7) Many educational problems which end up in hearings or mediation could have been handled before people got upset, by good, honest communication about the educational plan. Use the IEP as a way to make your needs and those of your child known.

<u>The document</u>

An IEP is not a legal assurance that your child will learn. It is a plan and, like any other plan, should be considered changeable. While it does not guarantee that your child will reach the goals, it does mean that the school district will use the methods specified in it to help your child learn.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR PLACEMENT, THE PARENT ROLE

Legal role

The school must:

- invite parents to the meeting at which the IEP is written
- make a good faith effort to arrange the meeting so that the parents can come
- inform parents in their own language (e.g., Spanish)
- keep a record of attempts to get parents to participate if parents do not attend the IEP meeting
- provide parents with a copy of the IEP if they request one
- give parents the opportunity to bring a friend or advocate

Your signature

Not all districts require that you sign an IEP. However, many districts do. If you are asked to sign an IEP you will note that your signature indicates either that you were given an opportunity to participate in its development or that you agree with its content. This signature does not prevent you or your child's teacher from revising an IEP. Refusal to sign need not prevent the school from offering your child a program.

You never need to sign an IEP at a conference. Take it home and think about it before you sign. If you have questions about it ask for help. You can get help from your school contacts, from other parents, from parent advocates.

Before the conference

- review what will be discussed
- know and share with the coordinator what you would like to discuss
- take the time to define what goals you would like for your child
- consider what your child's own goals are: discuss them with your child or use your powers of observation
- jot down your thoughts and questions so you don't forget them
- think of a relaxing way to start the conference -- with a compliment for the teacher, for example

HOT TIP!

* Don't get "psyched up" for a conference, get "psyched down" and try to be calm. You are naturally very involved in a planning conference because you are the parent. School staff are still new enough at sharing the educational planning with you so that they might feel nervous. It helps if you can take some of the burden for helping folks understand each other. *

At the conference

You attend an IEP conference as a full planning partner. Your value (and the value of the other educators, too) depends on how well you have done your homework. You may want to bring with you some of your observations (see pages 42, 70). Or you may bring your own working IEP. There are also suggestions for questions you might want to think about. Being prepared is half the job.

Communicating is the other half. It is your duty, and the duty of the other team members:

- to clarify questions
- to add ideas
- to learn from each other
- to work for what is best for your child

Consider an advocate

Two heads are often better than one. You may bring along a friend, a relative or an advocate. An extra observer can be extremely helpful, particularly if she/he is not so personally involved in the child as both parent and teacher are likely to be.

Anyone may serve as your advocate. It is helpful, but not necessary, to have someone familiar with special education or with your child.

Many advocates refrain from talking at meetings. Just being there may enough to give you confidence.

(See pages 7 and 8 for ways to find an advocate.)

Questions to think about before an IEP conference

- what skills would you most like your child to learn?
- are there concerns about your child's functioning at home that could be addressed by work at school?
- what aspects of your child's behavior do you believe need to be improved?
- what do you believe to be your child's strengths and needs?
- what methods have you found to be effective in rewarding and punishing your child?
- to what extent does your child interact with children in the neighborhood?
- what are your feelings about providing opportunities for your child to interact with non-handicapped children?

Another good resource on IEPs for parents and professionals is: Turnbull, Ann P.; Strickland, Bonnie; and Brantley, John C.; Developing and Implementing Individualized Education Programs. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., in press.

Questions to ask yourself in reviewing an IEP

1) Do I understand the words used and their meanings?

2) Do the goals make sense in terms of:

- the evaluation (they should be related)
- what my child can do now (they should be ambitious, but not impossible)
- what I want for my child (they should include skills which will make it easier for people to be around your child and should reflect your hopes for your child)

3) Are the methods, or programs, proposed clearly? Do I have an idea of what people intend to do with my child?

4) Will I know if we have reached our goals, or not?

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR PLACEMENT, TOOLS

Vocabulary

Behavior modification: a way of changing behavior based on a set of rules. Common concepts in behavior modification include:

positive reinforcement: a reward for desired behavior
negative reinforcement: a punishment for unwanted behavior
extinction: ignoring unwanted behavior as a means of removing it
time out: removing a child to a place where she/he has no stimulation (a form of negative reinforcement)
delayed gratification: waiting until later for rewards
tokens: items (such as stars or poker chips) which can be used to stand for rewards
task analysis: breaking down a complex action into simple steps

Behavior programming: training which concerns itself with what the student does rather than his understanding or processing

Conservation of numbers: the principle that numbers remain constant no matter how they are represented (e.g., six buttons are the same spread out, in a bunch, in various groupings) -- thought to underlie much mathematical understanding

Decoding: the ability to read unfamiliar words

Least restrictive environment (LRE): the principle that children with handicaps should have as much contact with "normal" children as possible without damaging the chances for the education of either the children with special needs or the normal children

Mainstreaming: the practice of educating students with special needs directly in a regular class for all or part of their program

Phonics: the principles which govern the relation between letters and letter combinations and the sounds they stand for

What you should expect to happen at the IEP conference

Introductions: Who is there and what are their jobs? (Be sure you write these down.)

Summary of student's current status (where is your child now?):

- academic achievement (school work)
- social adaptation (being with other people)
- psychomotor skills (coordination, being able to get around)
- self-help adaptive behavior (everyday self-care)
- vocational skills (work skills)

(be sure to share your view of your child's behavior at home)

Summary of evaluation findings (pulling together the evaluation information):

- psychological tests
- observation in school (what's been happening in school?)
- educational experience (your child's background at school)
- medical and developmental history (the history of your child's growing up)
- parent/family information

(be sure you understand all of the tests and observation results and that you agree with the way they are being used)

Identification of educational strength and needs (your child's)

(offer your own thoughts on what you believe are your child's strengths and needs)

Review of previous services and progress

(let others at the conference know whether you think your child's progress has been what you felt it should be)

Identification of long-range (one year) educational goals

- academic goals
- practical daily living skills goals
- career and vocational goals
- social goals

HOT TIP!

* Be sure to express your own concerns for your child *
* -- what you think are of highest priority -- and be *
* sure the goals selected as high priority are real- *
* istic and important for your child. *

Short-term objectives for your child (ways to get to the long-range goals)

(be sure you can see how the objectives will lead your child to those long-range goals. Also, know how long this will take)

Methods to be used for determining your child's progress

(be sure you understand and agree with the methods and time schedule proposed to find out if your child is making progress)

Services required to meet the goals

(be sure all the services you feel your child needs are listed and completely described and that you know who will be responsible for each service. Know exactly what will be done, and when the service will start and end. This should all be written down.)

BY THE END OF THE CONFERENCE YOU SHOULD KNOW:

Major educational goals

- how they will happen
- when they will happen

Services to be given

- who will provide them
- how, when, and for how long

What you can do at home

Time when the IEP will be reviewed

MODEL OF AN IEP

Annual Goal(s); Long & Short-Term Instructional Objectives with Performance Criteria	Anticipated Timeline	Instructional and/or Teaching Strategies (Interventions, Methods, Materials)	Method of Measurement (With Anticipated Schedule for Evaluation)
Examples:			
continue to develop reading skills (long term objective)			
identify upper and lower case letters (short term objective) with 90% accuracy (performance criterion)	September-January 1981	teacher-made materials direct teaching games	observation and testing at 3 week intervals
or			
independent appropriate dressing (long term goal)			
identify weather conditions (short term objective) daily to predict temperature range and precipitation (criterion)	September-January	calling weather service dialing listening for key info visual cues	performance checked daily until consistent for 2 weeks
match clothing weights and layers to weather (short term objective) with 98% accuracy (performance criterion)	November-June	"experiments" with hot and cold individualized clothing inventory notebook	daily performance check parent observation until consistent success in choice is observed for 2 weeks in each season

Student Name Student Number D.O.B. Sex Grade School

How to write your own IEP

Here is a brief outline to help you write your own IEP. Few parents go through all the steps. If you get through step (2) you will have useful information to take to an IEP conference. Do not worry if your effort is not complete or perfect. The IEP you bring to the conference is a starting point, not a finished product.

1) Collect and review your information: educational reports from the last year or two, the most recent M-team report, notes on teacher conferences.

2) Write down a list of goals you think your child can accomplish in the next year or two. Be sure to include all of the areas which are important to you -- for example, reading, writing, math, communication, science, social studies, the arts, physical development, self-care and independence, vocational goals, social interaction.

3) Use your reports, evaluations and observations to decide how close your child is to achieving these goals. Starting with the steps your child has mastered, write down three or four steps which you think your child should master during the year.

4) Take a guess at how long it will take your child to master each step you listed in (3).

5) Think of ways to teach your child each step listed in (3). Don't worry if you have only a vague plan here.

6) Specify ways you would like your child's mastery checked: tests, checklists, observation, or behavior samples are examples of techniques. How often should these be done?

7) Make a copy of your document (steps (1) thorugh (6)) for each IEP participant before the conference. (Use the form from your district or the model on page 83.)

Meeting strategies

Honesty: Being straightforward and honest will benefit your child in the long run.

Assertiveness: Be willing to explain, repeat, press for, and help educators think up ways to avoid problems in order to get something you think is important.

Appreciation: People will be more likely to cooperate if you give them credit for their efforts.

Reviewing and repeating: Make sure you understand. Repeat anything important. A review is good technique for ending meetings.

Allies: Most ideas seem more important if they are shared. Find some team member who is likely to agree with you and prepare him/her for your suggestions before the meeting.

Compromise: The law requires that your child be educated in a way from which she/he can benefit, not necessarily in the way which holds the greatest promise. But you shouldn't expect a "perfect" program.

Plan your follow-up: Inform people of what you plan to do and when.

Carry out your follow-up: Do what you said you would. You can also check to see that others do what they said they would.

Understand the other person: You don't have to agree with her/him, but try to figure out why she/he is doing whatever she/he does.

Recognize areas of expertise: You are an expert in understanding, observing and dealing with your child. Your observations in those areas are valuable and believable. Claiming that you are an expert in areas outside your parental (or professional) role makes anything you say less believable.

Chapter 6. Placement

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PLACEMENT, THE PROCESS

What is it?

Placement is the assignment of a child to a teacher and program where the recommendations of the IEP can be carried out.

Who does it?

By law the Special Education Administrator for your district is responsible to make placement offers to parents. He/she may allow someone else in the district (often a Coordinator for a particular disability) to make the offer. However, the Special Education Director is the person who holds legal responsibility for making an offer.

A child cannot be placed until the parent or guardian accepts the placement offer. This requirement puts as much responsibility on the parents as on the school. You are responsible to see that your child has a good program.

How is it done?

1) The M-team report and the IEP are reviewed by the Special Education Director or a person (or committee) he/she appoints.

2) This person or group tries to match the child to a program which can help the child reach the goals listed.

3) The parent receives a placement offer to approve.

4) If the parent approves the offer, the child starts to receive exceptional educational services as soon as possible, but, by law, within 30 days.

5) If the parents do not approve:

   - they are usually asked to discuss the placement offer with the M-team or Special Education Director
   - the child remains in the present placement program until a placement offer is accepted
   - parents may start a mediation or appeal process

What are the considerations in placement?

1) The most important consideration in assessing a placement must be whether the child's educational goals can be met, that is, whether it is appropriate.

   - does the teacher have the necessary skills?
   - is the class a size that allows enough time for your child? Does it allow your child to learn with and from other children?
   - can all the goals be worked on?

2) The school has to educate your child in the most normal setting available in which your child can learn -- without disrupting other children's education. That means that your child is entitled to as much contact with children who have no educational handicaps as possible.

3) The school district must try to educate your child as near to your home as possible. While each district may not have every possible program, each district must try to make arrangements for your child within a reasonable distance from your home. Bus rides to exceptional education programs must not be so long that the student is exhausted. They may not shorten the length of the normal school day.

4) Is the need for special education well-documented in the M-team report? Were the parents' and child's rights honored?

PLACEMENT, THE PARENT ROLE

Legal role

No placement can be made without prior notice and parental consent. This means that you should expect to receive a letter or form and that you will be asked to sign one or more copies and return them to the school district. You will want to keep your copy of this form.

What the notice should say

The Federal and State laws say what the notice should include:

- an explanation of your rights
- a description of the program offered: the type, level and location
- an explanation of why it is being offered
- a description of other programs which were considered and why they were rejected
- description of each evaluation procedure used as a basis for the placement
- other relevant factors

You may not find all of these things in your placement offer, but they are in the IEP or M-team report. The placement offer will probably refer you to these reports. If you have been involved in the evaluation procedure and IEP, you will be able to supply most of the missing information. Think of this list as an outline for thinking about a placement.

Finding out about other placements

Usually, your school district's Special Education Administrator and M-team are the best people to tell you about placements which are available. If you are not satisfied that any placements they offer will be right for your child, tell them why. Then ask the school officials some of the following questions:

- does the school have any placements which would be more (or less) structured?
- could the school offer different placements if you were willing to have your child travel further?
- could the school create a better placement by combining two programs? (For example, a joint ED/LD placement.)
- does a neighboring school district have a different, and perhaps better, program?

Some parents have found that they want to find out more about placements themselves. This is a good time to use parents' groups. Even if you have not been a member of a group, you can call the president or chairman of a group in your district and ask for advice. (If you have not located a group yet, look on page 7 for tips on finding helpful people.)

How to decide whether a placement seems right

1) First, use your IEP. Does the placement make sense in terms of the goals, objectives and procedures recommended?

2) Visit the classroom. Form your own impression. (There are some outlines for observing classes on pages 90-91.) Both parents should try to do this. It is very important to see the classroom, rather than just hear about it.

3) Talk to other parents. They can help you make decisions.

4) Review the considerations listed on page 88 of this section. They should be considered by you as well as by the school.

HOT TIP!

* Take time to find out how your child feels about placements. Give him/her opportunities to vent frustration, anger, or disappointment. No one likes to be different. But if you take the time and effort to listen to your child and support him/her, you can help your child learn to live with difficult situations. *

Observing a class

Here are some factual things to look at when observing a class:

1) How big is it?

2) How many adults are present?

- can your child get enough individual attention?
- will he/she be encouraged to be independent, to work with other children, or to depend on an adult?

3) What are the other students like?

- will your child be with children with whom he/she can be friends, or are the children the wrong age or very different in abilities?

4) What is being taught?

- does it seem appropriate to your child's IEP, understanding that your individual child's IEP is not necessarily represented?
- do the materials seem right for the ages of the children as well as their abilities?

5) Here are some questions which might help you get a feel for things you can't measure:

- did anything unexpected happen? Was it ignored? Was it built upon?
- was class discussion easy and natural? Were student opinions respected? Was discussion student- or teacher-oriented? Engineered?
- were the students interested, busy?
- was the teacher engaged with students most of the time?
- did any material or event prompt additional exploration?
- was there any sense of exploration, wonder, drama?
- were students allowed time to experience trying? To experience success?
- did anyone touch anyone else? Was this positive communication?

Principles of normalization and the least restrictive environment

Today people with all kinds of handicaps are living independently and working in the community in a way that could hardly have been imagined even ten years ago. They can do this because they have been trained to function in the same settings used by people with no handicaps. They have been taught ways to deal with their own special needs. Education and services which allow people to use their full potential for independent living are often called normalizing. These services are most effective when they are performed in the setting in which they will be used. Settings which encourage normalization, which are as much like those in which people with no handicaps function, are called the least restrictive environment.

The law requires that handicapped children be educated in the least restrictive environment. That means that your child should have:

- as much social contact with "normal" children as possible
- a school as close to home as possible

Questions about least restrictive environment to consider

1) Can your child's program be arranged so that special services are given in the regular classroom? in your neighborhood school?

2) Are there subjects your child can learn with the regular class? (Art, music, or gym are not always the best to start with if your child has trouble following directions with lots of steps, working and listening at the same time, or concentrating in a place where other children are engaged in different activities.)

3) Can your child join in field trips, after school activities and special events with children who are not handicapped?

4) When does your child arrive at school, eat lunch, have recess, and leave school? Is it at the same time as non-handicapped students?

5) Does your child come to school in a bus or van which is very different from those used by other students? Does he/she ride only with handicapped students? Does he/she use the same entrance to the school as other students?

6) Do your child's teachers teach children with no handicaps as well as children with handicaps?

7) Is your child's classroom near regular classrooms? Do handicapped students mix with other students in the halls, between classes?

8) Does your child's daily schedule include the same kinds of classes regular schedules include: art, music, shop, home economics, physical education, field trips, study halls?

9) Does your child have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities and clubs? Can he/she develop his/her own interests?

10) Does your child's classroom have materials similar to those you would expect to find in a class for children of your child's age? Or is he/she putting together nursery rhyme puzzles while other children the same age are playing with cards or assembling model airplanes?

Recognize that your child will have a modified program if he/she is in exceptional education. But be watchful for ways to make your child's education as much like that of other children as possible.

PLACEMENT, TOOLS

Vocabulary

Appropriate education: an education which meets the needs of the child and allows him/her to achieve the specified goals. (Note: this does not mean the best possible education; just an education which can work.)

Least restrictive environment: a setting which is as much like that provided for children with no diagnosed handicaps as possible. We judge this in terms of:

- maximum opportunity to be educated with regular classes
- as much social contact with "normal" children as possible
- location as near to the local school as possible

Mainstreaming: placing a handicapped child in a classroom or other activities with non-handicapped children. (There should be written goals for this part of the program as well as the special class part in the IEP.)

Support services or related services: services which are not usually provided by the classroom teacher, but which may be necessary for your child to benefit from his/her school program. These include:

- audiology and speech pathology
- psychological services
- early identification
- social work
- physical and occupational therapy
- medical services for evaluation and diagnosis
- counseling
- school health services
- parent training
- recreation
- transportation
- adaptive physical education, art, music or home economics (if your child is unable to benefit from the regular programs)

Structured setting: a highly organized setting. Some of the things which make a class more structured are:

- clear rules about what is and is not allowed in class
- limiting the sights and sounds which might distract students
- a daily schedule which students understand
- dependence on planned lessons rather than spontaneous learning
- step-by-step instructions

A review of program settings

Program	School type	Homeroom placement	What happens
Program support Itinerant specialist	Regular	Regular class	Special teacher consults with regular teacher or child in the regular classroom
Resource room	Regular	Regular class	Student leaves class for up to 2 or 3 hours' work on a particular subject
Self-contained Integrated	Regular	Special class	Student joins regular class for certain subjects
Self-contained Modified	Regular or Special	Special class	Entire class may go to a different teacher for specific curriculum -- no instruction with "normal" students
Self-contained Complete	Regular or Special	Special class	All instruction occurs in the special class

Note: These programs do not include all possible arrangements. Encourage your school district to think creatively about how to educate your child.

Organizations which offer exceptional education services

1) Your local school district

2) 66.30 Agreements: A State law numbered 66.30 permits school districts to enter into a partnership directly with other districts to provide services. These may be called a consortium, contracted services, or inter-district placement.

3) CHCEB, County Handicapped Children's Education Boards. Counties may have a board which runs some (or all) of the special education programs for the county. School districts may purchase these services.

4) CESA, Cooperative Educational Service Agencies. There are nineteen agencies from which districts may purchase services, such as staff time, evaluations, finding programs for children, and occasionally direct programming.

5) The State of Wisconsin. The Department of Public Instruction operates a School for the Visually Handicapped in Janesville and a School for the Deaf in Delavan. Additionally, the Department of Health and Social Services through the Division of Corrections and the Division of Community Services provides educational programs for children residing in State-operated facilities.

Living away from home for education

Occasionally it is necessary to plan for a child to be educated in a program which requires that the child live away from home. When this happens, your school district needs to pay for the living arrangements. But before you agree to a placement which requires that your child be placed away from home, think about the following things carefully:

1) The more "normal" (or like your family) your child's living situation is, the better the chance for your child to grow up able to deal with normal life situations.

2) There are alternatives to institutionalization, even if your child needs lots of care:

- placement in a foster home does not mean that you have failed in any way
- sometimes a child can stay at home if services are available on a regular basis. You may want to find out what your County Developmental Disabilities Board can provide
- many areas have group homes which can provide more structure (strict organization) in a homelike arrangement
- residential schools, even well-run ones, cannot provide as much warmth, caring, and individual programming as a home can. They need to run on schedules
- can you separate your child's educational needs from his/her medical, emotional and daily living needs? Try to meet his/her most intense needs first and then piece together the rest of the program.
- all children learn by modeling (copying the people around them). If your child lives with people who are handicapped, he/she will think of him/herself as handicapped and act handicapped.
- children are highly motivated to do the things their friends can do. The chance to use this motivation may be more important than the intense program available in a special school.
- children who are sent away to school often feel rejected by their family, especially if they do not understand why they have been sent away.

Your decision about where your child will be educated is an important decision. If you consider the options available to you carefully, you will make a good choice. Whatever decision you make, you can feel good about it when you have taken into account all of your child's needs, your family's needs, and the resources in your community which can help.

Chapter 7. IEP for Instruction

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See IEP for Placement (page 80)	

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR INSTRUCTION, THE PROCESS

What is it?

According to State law, within six weeks of placement and no less than yearly after that, the IEP must be reviewed and expanded. At this time the teacher specifies the materials and procedures which will be used to reach the goals in the IEP. This changes the IEP from a placement plan to an instructional program

Who does it?

As of September 1980, this IEP meeting must be attended by:

- the child's classroom teacher
- a representative of the public school qualified to provide the services (principal or administrator)
- the parent or guardian
- a member of the evaluation team
- any other person the parent or school feels is important

How is it done?

There is no present rule for how this meeting should occur. Some school districts hope to be able to review the IEP six weeks after placement rather informally, by telephone.

At the end of the school year, you can expect to have a meeting to:

- report on progress made
- review and change the IEP
- plan for next year

What is it good for?

The IEP gives teachers and parents a chance to decide exactly how to reach the goals stated in the IEP. It helps teachers to think about what they do on a daily basis and why they are doing it. It helps parents to understand how their children are being taught.

The IEP Review also gives parents and teachers a chance to change the original IEP after the child has been in school a few

weeks. Teachers often change their ideas about children after the get-acquainted period. Parents, too, have more information about a child's reaction to placement.

About detail

Teachers in some classes may want and need to have an extremely detailed IEP. Only you can judge exactly how much detail you are comfortable with. It does not make sense to push your child's teacher to be more detailed than you or the teacher care to be. But it does make sense to make sure that the IEP is a useful document.

Sometimes details in an IEP can be used to help make the school district provide extra resources. Consider specifying how much time is needed in the activity or what specific materials are needed as a way to get the school district to buy the materials and provide staff.

IEP FOR INSTRUCTION, THE PARENTS' ROLE

Legal role

State rules require that the parent be involved in the making of the Individualized Educational Plan. This seems to mean that parents must be involved in revisions and additions to the IEP. Since neither the school districts nor the State Department of Public Instruction have much experience with the new IEP process, it is difficult to know what more to say about the ways in which parents must be involved. You may want to review Chapter 5 for ideas of ways to be helpful in writing IEPs.

What parents can do

In order to save time and effort, the schools will probably use this second step of the IEP as a means for adding specific teaching methods to the M-team's IEP. Parents need to:

- help the teacher remember to review the evaluation and goals for changes he/she might wish to make
- try to understand how the techniques will help reach the goals
- use this meeting to understand the child's classroom
- find out what you can do at home to supplement the school program

What a good instructional plan can do

Instructional plans can:

- assure that your child gets all the related services she/he needs
- help a regular class teacher understand the goals for a student during the time she/he is in that class
- help any teacher define necessary ingredients for teaching your child, including:
  - . subject matter
  - . ways to appraoch the material
  - . the necessary teaching skills
  - . specific materials and teaching tools
  - . ways to find out if the teaching is working

If you are not satisfied with your child's educational program

First, try to let the teacher know exactly what you wish were happening

- be honest, clear and open
- try to correct problems informally

Use the IEP to:

- clarify goals, objectives and services needed
- specify teaching skills and styles your child needs
- outline the content of what is to be taught
- define the general thrust of your child's education

Consistency or stagnation

If your child has been receiving exceptional education for several years, it is a good idea to review IEPs for the past several years together. When you look over IEPs from several years, you may find the same goals appear year after year. This can be a sign that the student has a consistent program and that each year's learning is building step by step towards these goals. On the other hand, it may be a sign that the goals are not appropriate for the child or that little progress is being made. Parents need to take a long look to sort out whether the IEP objectives reflect the student's need to progress toward consistent goals.

For example, if shoe tying is on the list of goals year after year, you might ask:

- has last year's progress been built upon?
- has the same method been used year after year?
  - . if progress is being made, you may want to stick with the method
  - . if little progress has been made, you might want to try another method
- is the goal achieveable, or should the student stick to loafers, or gym shoes with elastic instead of laces?

If your child's IEPs contain goals which seem very different from each other each year, you should also have questions. If the goals deal with reading and math one year, work skills the next year, and social relations the next, you will need to find out how one year's program grows out of the previous one. If the teaching methods seem different each year, you need to find out why. Is the teacher looking for a better way to teach your child? Does he/she know what methods have worked well in the past?

Values

All educational programs have an important foundation in values. Some people, for instance, feel it is more important to memorize facts; others prefer understanding analytical arguments. Some people care most about social skills; others would sacrifice social skills for academic skills. You need to understand that you, your child's teacher, and the school district all have values. You each make assumptions about what is most important and which is the best way to do things.

Sometimes, when there are disagreements about what should be in an educational program, the problem is that you and the teacher each think you share values, when you really do not.

If you find yourself in an IEP meeting with a difficult disagreement, it may pay to consider whether the problem is one which deals with information, or one which deals with values. Find out if you disagree about:

- what your child is like (what she/he is able to do); you need to review and revise the evaluation
- how to teach your child (what books and methods to use); you need to use the educators' professional skills. Encourage them to explain <u>why</u> and <u>how</u> their techniques will work
- what to teach your child (self-care, academic or vocational skills, for example); you are more likely in an area of values. The educators may simply disagree with you about what you think is important. It can be helpful to honestly admit that there are some things you believe are best for your child simply because you believe it.

Does a good IEP mean a good program?

Writing an IEP is a skill related to teaching. It is not necessary, though, that your child's program will be accurately represented by the IEP. Some teachers can write impressive programs, but have difficulty carrying them out. Most teachers who know their craft will be able to write an IEP which is acceptable to you. Do not think that your job is done when you have written an IEP. You will need to continue to watch your child's program throughout the school year.

Parents of children with exceptional educational needs often have a hard time following through. Here are some ways you can keep informed:

- look at work your child brings home
- talk with your child about school
- call the teacher for brief progress reports
- observe your child's class
- volunteer to help out in the classroom

HOT TIP!

* If you are in the school building, your child's *
* teacher will have a chance to give you an informal *
* progress report each time she/he sees you. Give *
* teachers plenty of chances to do this if you can. *
* It pays to be active in the Parent-Teacher Organi- *
* zation or volunteer regularly. *

Chapter 8. Fair Hearings, Due Process

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FAIR HEARINGS, DUE PROCESS

What are they?

The first chapters of this handbook deal with the steps in setting up an appropriate education for children with special needs. Many of these steps are legally required. In order for legal requirements to have an effect, there has to be a way to enforce those requirements. The State Department of Public Instruction (DPI) enforces these requirements in district by district reviews of Special Education Plans. DPI reviews and site visits are a way to assure that whole districts follow the Federal and State rules.

However, parents who disagree with particular decisions or believe that the school has not followed the legal requirements in their child's case need a way to get the school district to follow the rules. Formal procedures for resolving disagreements are called due process.

What are the steps in due process?

Due process can include the following steps:

Mediation: an attempt to settle differences by asking an unaffected person to help the parents and school reach an agreement.

Fair Hearing: presentation of the "case" for each side to an officer who makes a decision.

Appeal: review of the hearing officer's decision by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction's office.

Legal suit: a case in Civil or Federal Court contesting the appeal opinion.

Who starts due process actions?

Either parents or school district officials may start due process actions.

What is mediation good for?

Mediation is a way of settling problems. Usually people start mediation after they have struggled with problems which

they cannot solve themselves. It is particularly useful in reaching compromises and agreements when parents and the school system have difficulty understanding each other's points of view.

Few school districts in Wisconsin require use of mediation. However, if you seem to be failing in your effort to communicate, mediation may be useful. There is no reason why you should not try mediation if you think it will be helpful.

Who can mediate?

Here are some places you could get a mediator to help:

Your local area may have psychologists or social workers skilled in communications.

Your CESA may be willing to provide a mediator.

The State Department of Public Instruction commonly helps solve disputes.

Advocacy groups are often willing to help mediate disputes.

Avoid asking people to be mediators if:

- they are employed by the school system
- they have worked with or diagnosed your child
- they have anything personal to gain from any decision reached
- they are not fully trusted by either you or the school district

What are the other due process procedures good for?

Due process is especially useful for system-wide problems. Problems which have been handled through due process with some success include:

- failure of schools to provide education for groups of students
- isolation of handicapped children in remote buildings
- use of culturally unfair tests which result in the identification of large groups of ethnic or cultural groups being defined as handicapped

What most due process is not good for

Experience indicates that due process should be reserved as a last resort for solving problems related to an individual child's classification, placement, or program.

Before you start a due process procedure, consider the following points:

1) When you start due process you define the school system as your opponent. Consider how hard this makes it for your child and his/her teacher to continue an education.

2) You can be sure that hearings and appeals are emotionally draining, stressful, and exhausting. Consider if you want to use your energy that way.

3) Even if you "win",the school system will remember that you started a hearing. They may react by educating your child half-heartedly or spending too much time protecting themselves.

4) Most due process proceedings are costly and take a long time. Often you need to have a lawyer represent you. Copies of the records and testimony can be very expensive.

5) Many decisions take place too late for correction of the problems.

This handbook deals with ways to avoid needing due process procedures. With that in mind, we are not providing a detailed look at due process. If you find you need to know more, first review your rights. You can get a list from your district. Then discuss your case with an advocate or lawyer to decide what to do next.

DUE PROCESS, TOOLS

How to find a lawyer

The following are steps to take in finding a lawyer:

- ask parent groups and disability groups to recommend a lawyer. (Use the list at the back of this handbook.)
- call your local legal services office
- consult with your family lawyer, if you have one

Questions you should ask a lawyer

1) Are you familiar with the laws (Public Law 94-142, Section 504; and Chapter 115)?

2) Are you familiar with the local school district, with the Department of Public Instruction?

3) Can we agree about what is best for the child in this case?

4) How much is this going to cost?

Questions a good lawyer should ask you

1) What is the nature of your problem? Do you differ with the school on diagnosis or on your idea of how to educate?

2) Why do you think you have problems? Is the school district acting incompetently? Are they refusing to do what is legally required out of lack of resources, out of ignorance?

3) What do you expect to gain through the lawyer's services?

4) Is your child the only one being poorly programmed for in the district, or is this a larger problem?

5) What have you already done to solve your problem?

Whom to go to with what kind of problems

It is always a good idea to solve your problems in your child's education at the level closest to your child. Here is a list of people involved in your child's education and an indication of the kind of problems they can deal with relatively independently.

Teacher: any classroom problem including teaching materials, other children's behavior, classroom schedule

School principal: any problem which involves the use of resources in the school building -- the physical education, art, or home economics programs, organization of mainstream experiences

District program support teachers: (Many districts have these.) problems which may involve use of services available in the district, but not in your school building, problems requiring teacher training

District special education administrator: problems which require coordination between district special educators and regular educators

District superintendent: inter-district problems, problems requiring budget changes

School board: problems which the district personnel have been unwilling or unable to help solve. (Going to the school board, like legal action, makes it more difficult to cooperate with school personnel.) Innovative plans which may require board assent or approval

Department of Public Instruction personnel: problems in which the school district has failed to serve your child

In using this list, remember that it is always wise to "go up the ladder of responsibility" without missing any of the steps. Give each member of your child's educational team a chance to solve your educational problems.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The laws

Here is a brief summary of the laws you hear about in special education:

Chapter 115 (formerly referred to as Chapter 89) of the Wisconsin Statutes, passed in 1973: This law guarantees the right to a public education for children between the ages of three and twenty one with exceptional educational needs. Its rules and regulations sometimes may appear inconsistent with those of the Federal law. Chapter 115 is enforced by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Instruction.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: In September 1973, Congress passed a law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of physical or mental handicap in every federally assisted program or activity in the country. This includes pre-school, elementary, secondary and adult education.

Section 504 is older than P.L. 94-142. It is not tied in with funding. However, the two Federal laws are consistent with each other. Section 504 is more specific than P.L. 94-142 about elimination of discrimination by means of physical barriers or employment practices. It is enforced by the Office of Civil Rights, which makes a practice of setting time limits on agencies when requiring responses to complaints.

If you have a complaint in which you allege discrimination against a group of people, Section 504 will be helpful. It is of less assistance if your problem relates to an individual child's program or classification.

Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975: This Federal law requires free appropriate public education for all handicapped children, ages three to twenty one, in the United States. The regulations enforcing this act are interpreted by the Department of Public Instruction. It is the most specific Federal law regarding education. It is enforced by the Office of Special Education in the Department of Education. Before the Federal Court will hear a case under 94-142, you are required to have gone through the local, State and Federal hearing and appeal process.

You can get more information about these laws: The Department of Public Instruction can send you copies of the laws and the rules and regulations enforcing them. You can get more information from Closer Look. (See bibliography.)

A list of your legal rights

1) Parental consents: written consent is required before release of information, evaluation, and placement in an exceptional educational need (EEN) program.

2) Non-discriminatory testing: special education placements are provided on the basis of evaluation procedures appropriate to the child's physical, cultural and language background. No single test is to be the sole criterion for placement.

3) Native language: evaluation is to be completed and communication with parents carried out in their usual language.

4) Least restrictive environment: exceptional educational programs are to be carried out in settings which are as much like regular educational programs as possible.

5) Parent access to records: parents may review all records involved in their child's educational program. (School districts may charge the cost of copying records, should parents ask for copies.)

6) Independent educational evaluation: parents have the right to get independent evaluations, from qualified people who are not employed by the school district, considered in evaluating their children.

7) Confidentiality: information contained in school records may not be released without written parental consent.

8) Meeting notices: parents shall be informed of the date, time, and location of IEP meetings. If they are unable to attend, the school must try to re-schedule the meeting at a more convenient time.

9) Notification of rights: parents shall be fully informed, by the school district, of their rights.

10) Right to representation: children are usually represented by their parents. The parents may bring a friend or an advocate to any meeting with the school and have legal representation during hearings or appeals.

11) M-team process: parents must be given the opportunity to participate in the M-team evaluation.

12) Appeals and hearings: parents have the right to contest local practices and appeal decisions.

Alphabet soup

Some common abbreviations which are found in exceptional education circles:

BD: Behaviorally disturbed (often like emotionally disturbed)

CESA: Cooperative Educational Service Agency

CHCEB: County Handicapped Children's Education Board

DCS: Division of Community Services of the State Department of Health and Social Services

DD: Developmental disabilities

DHC: Division for Handicapped Children (of DPI)

DPI: State Department of Public Instruction

DSS: Department of Social Services, the County agency which provides financial assistance and services

ED: Emotionally disturbed

EMR (EMH): Educable mentally retarded (handicapped)

H&SS: State of Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services

IEP: Individualized Educational Program (Plan)

LD: Learning disabilities

LEA: Local educational agency (usually, the school district, CESA or CHCEB)

LRE: Least restrictive environment

OCR: Office for Civil Rights (U.S. Department of Education)

OHI: Other health impaired, also OPH, other physical handicap

OSE (formerly BEH): Office of Special Education (formerly Bureau for Education of the Handicapped) of the U.S. Department of Education

SEA: State educational agency (in Wisconsin, this is DPI)

S/PH: Severe or profound handicap

TMR (TMH): Trainable mentally retarded (handicapped)

Who's who in exceptional education

This is a list of people who might be helpful to you in planning your child's education. We have filled in the state-wide positions. You will want to fill in your local names and addresses. Some districts may combine or share some of these positions.

State of Wisconsin Superintendent of Public Instruction
Name: Barbara Thompson (as of 1980)
Address: 125 S. Webster St.
Madison, WI 53702
Phone: 608/266-1771

Division for Handicapped Children, Assistant State Superintendent
Name: Victor Contrucci (as of 1980)
Address: 125 S. Webster St.
Madison, WI 53702
608/266-1649

School District Administrator
Name:
Address:

Phone:

Special Education Director
Name:
Address:

Phone:

Special Education Coordinators
Name:
Address:

Phone:

Program Support Teachers
Name:
Address:

Phone:

Transportation Coordinator
Name:
Address:

Phone:

School Principal
Name:
Address:

Phone:

School Psychologist
Name:
Address:

Phone:

School Social Worker
Name:
Address:

Phone:

School Secretary
Name:
Address:

Phone:

Teacher
Name:
Address:

Phone:

State organizations which serve children & adults with disabilities
(compiled in 1980)

* March of Dimes (no centralized state office)

South East Chapter
710 N. Plankington, 600
Milwaukee, WI 53203
(Executive Director:
Mike Murphy)
414/289-0880

North East Chapter
2626 S. Oenida St.
Green Bay, WI 54304
(Executive Director:
Richard Diedrich)
414/499-0727

North West Chapter
1326 Schofield Ave.
Schofield, WI 54476
(Executive Director:
Lewis Perkins)
715/359-3151

Capitol Chapter
502 East Main St.
Madison, WI 53703
(Executive Director:
Ron Steinhoff)
608/257-5151

* Muscular Dystrophy Association (divided into four regions; no centralized state office)

Sue Sanford-Ring (contact person)
1414 E. Washington Ave., #90
Madison, WI 53703
608/257-4233

Michael Fenske (contact person)
5918 W. North Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53208
414/453-7600

Dale Zschoche (contact person)
858 Marvelle Lane
Green Bay, WI 54303
414/499-4571

Kathy Bruner (contact person)
1462 Grand Ave.
Schofield, WI 54476
715/359-0408

* Wisconsin Association for Retarded Citizens
2700 Laura Lane
Middleton, WI 53562
(Executive Director: Merlen Kurth)
608/831-3444

(Wisconsin ARC serves people of all ages who are mentally retarded or developmentally disabled. ARC operates, among other activities, an Information and Referral Service, a Citizen Advocacy Program, Guardianship Training, Youth ARCs (young volunteers providing companionship) and Respite Care Programs.

There are 40-50 (16 staffed) local chapters of WARC. Call 608/831-3444 and the state association will give you information and put you in touch with your local chapter.)

* United Way
(There is no central United Way office, but many local chapters throughout the state. An information and referral source. One would need to look up in the phone director his/her local United Way chapter.)

(* indicates state organization unit.)

* United Cerebral Palsy of Wisconsin (6 local affiliates)
  625 W. Washington Ave.
  Madison, WI 53703
  (Executive Director: Sue Kendrick)
  608/251-6533

* Easter Seal Society of Wisconsin
  2702 Monroe St.
  Madison, WI 53711
  (Executive Director: Roy Campbell)
  608/231-3411

  (This covers all of the State, but Milwaukee County has an office which covers that county. Easter Seal provides a broad program of direct services to the handicapped citizens of Wisconsin, e.g., camps, homecraft programs, direct assistance for care and treatment, parent-child training.)

  Easter Seal Society of Milwaukee County
  5225 W. Burleigh St.
  Milwaukee, WI 53210
  (Executive Director: Scott Defebaugh)
  414/871-1270

* Wisconsin Association for Children with Behavior Disorders
  Ken Montanye, President
  CESA 6
  725 W. Park Ave.
  Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
  715/723-0341

* Wisconsin Epilepsy Association (has 6 local chapters and 5 local centers)
  1245 East Washington Ave.
  Madison, WI 53703
  (Executive Director: Aleta Barmore)
  608/255-9009

* Wisconsin & National Spinal Cord Injury Foundation (both same address; there are local affiliates)
  5261 N. Port Washington Rd.
  Milwaukee, WI 53217
  414/963-0620

* Wisconsin Association for Developmental Disabilities (no local affiliates)
  2772 Laura Lane
  Middleton, WI 53562
  608/831-7449

* Wisconsin Council of the Blind, Inc.
  1245 East Washington Ave.
  Madison, WI 53703
  608/255-1166

* Wisconsin Heart Association (offices in Green Bay, Madison, Eau Claire)
  795 North Van Buren
  Milwaukee, WI 53202
  414/271-9999

* Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (four parent groups in the state)
  6330 W. North Ave.
  Milwaukee, WI 53213
  414/257-0525

* Prader-Willi Syndrome Association
  P.O. Box 392
  Long Lake, MN 55356

  Wisconsin representative:
  Mrs. Virginia Cardarella
  5418 Camden Rd.
  Madison, WI 53716
  608/222-6755

* Wisconsin Chapter, Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc.
  c/o Comprehensive Child Care Center
  1000 North Oak Ave.
  Marshfield, WI 54449
  715/387-5511

  Milwaukee Tourette Syndrome Assn.
  Mrs. Anita Johnson
  8651 N. 63rd St.
  Milwaukee, WI 53223
  414/354-8651

* Tuberous Sclerosis Association
  State representative: Mrs. Pat Martinelli
  Route 8, 6063 Grandview Rd.
  Verona, WI 53593
  608/271-3663

* Wisconsin Spina Bifida Association (several local branches)
  P.O. Box 18093
  Milwaukee, WI 53218
  (President: Douglass Petersen)
  414/461-9252

* Wisconsin State Society for Autistic Children
  625 West Washington, Room 206
  Madison, WI 53702
  608/251-0937

* Wisconsin Assn. for Children with Learning Disabilities (many local chapters)
  922 E. Fullmore Ave.
  Eau Claire, WI 54701
  (President: Mary Daniels)
  715/823-2078

* Wisconsin Special Olympics, Inc.
2059 Atwood Ave.
Madison, WI 53704
608/241-1324

* Care Cabs, Inc. (offices in Madison, Milwaukee and Green Bay)
5538 W. National Ave.
West Allis, WI 53214
414/476-1006

(Transportation for physically handicapped individuals on Medicaid.)

* Volunteer Braillists, Inc.
5930 Old Sauk Rd.
Madison, WI 53705
608/231-1966 (9:00 a.m. to noon)

(A good information source. Have certified braillists, will transcribe; have a Braille lending library. Volunteer organization.)

* Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Dr. Ken Johnson
Milwaukee Medical Clinic
3003 West Good Hope Rd.
Milwaukee, WI 53209
414/352-3100

* Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy
2 West Mifflin
Madison, WI 53703
608/251-9600 or toll free in Wisconsin 1/800/362-9053

* Central Wisconsin Center for Developmental Disabilities
Library Information Center
317 Knutson Dr.
Madison, WI 53704
(Jane Porter, contact person)
608/249-2151, ext. 327

* Waisman Resource Center (on mental retardation and human development)
1500 Highland Ave.
Madison, WI 53706
608/263-5846

* Wisconsin Disability Coalition (6 regional chapters)
1954 E. Washington Ave.
Madison, WI 53704
(Chris Linn, contact person)
608/255-7696

* Wisconsin Council on Human Concerns
2059 Atwood Ave.
Madison, WI 53704
608/249-6654

(Information on pending legislation in areas of health and social services)

* Wisconsin Association of Family and Children's Agencies
22 North Carroll St.
Madison, WI 53703
(Executive Director: John R. Grace)
608/257-5939

* Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 S. Webster St.
Madison, WI 53702

State Superintendent
Barbara Thompson
608/266-1771

Bureau for Exceptional Children
Kenneth Blessing, Director
608/266-1781

Physical, Sensory & Language Impaired Section
Betty Rowe
608/266-6981

Federal Support Programs Section
John Stadtmueller
608/266-2841

Division for Handicapped Children
Victor Contrucci, Assistant State Superintendent
608/266-1649

Developmental, Behavioral & Learning Impaired Section
Thomas Stockton
608/266-1787

Bureau for Children with Physical Needs
Dr. Horace Tenney, M.D., Director
608/266-3886

Division for Handicapped Children's Hotline (8:00 AM to 4:00 PM)
Madison 266-8143
Milwaukee 342-3020
Statewide 1-800-362-3020

* Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped
1700 W. State St.
Janesville, WI 53545
William English, Superintendent
608/755-2950

* Wisconsin School for the Deaf
309 W. Walworth St.
Delavan, WI 53115
414/728-2677

* Parents Anonymous
1/800/242-6916

Professional Education Organizations

* Wisconsin Council for Exceptional Children
Mr. Ken Hobbs, President
D. C. Everest Schools
6300 Alderson St.
Schofield, WI 54476
715/359-4221

Division of Mental Retardation
Hans Hahn, President
Department of Special Education, UW, Whitewater
Whitewater, WI 53190
414/472-4877

Division of Physically Handicapped/Multiply Handicapped
Mary Carole Wise, President
206 Oak St.
Neilsville, WI 54456
715/743-3323

Division of Early Childhood
Jean Hilliard, Contact person
CESA 12
Portage, WI 53901
608/742-5513

Division for Career Development
Alice Kudlata, President
P.O. Drawer 10K
Milwaukee, WI 53201
414/475-8106

Division for Children with Communicative Disorders
Ann Bleuer, President
1311A E. Randolph Ct.
Milwaukee, WI 53212
414/963-1552

Council for Children with Behavior Disorders
Dr. Steven Bavolek, President
Department of Special Education, UW Eau Claire
Eau Claire, WI 54701
715/836-5740

Council of Administrators of Special Education
Robert Lorenz, President
107 N. Douglass St.
Appleton, WI 54911
414/739-5217

Division of Children with Learning Disabilities
Lynn Ptacek, President
Wilson School
1060 Glenview
Wauwatosa, WI 53213
414/258-3022

Department of Health and Social Services

* Division of Community Services
1 West Wilson St.
Madison, WI 53702

Bureau of Children, Youth & Families
608/266-3036

Bureau of Mental Health
608/266-2719

Council on Developmental Disabilities
608/266-7826

Bureau for the Hearing Impaired
608/266-8081

Bureau of Developmental Disabilities
608/266-0805

* Division of Economic Assistance
18 S. Thornton Ave.
Madison, WI 53702
608/266-3416

* SSI Medical Assistance Unit
18 S. Thornton Ave., P.O. Box 8913
Madison, WI 53702
1/800/362-9634

(Contact your County Department of Social Services for more information on questions concerning eligibility for Medical Assistance.)

* Division of Health
1 W. Wilson St.
Madison, WI 53702

Bureau of Health Care Financing
608/266-2521

EPSDT Section
P.O. Box 309
608/266-7164

* Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
131 W. Wilson St.
Madison, WI 53702
608/266-1281

Bureau for the Blind
608/266-0224

* Board of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education
4802 Sheboygan Ave.
Madison, WI 53702
608/266-1207

Bureau of Community and Special Projects Coordination
James Arness, contact person
608/266-0050

State Institutions

Central Wisconsin Center for Developmental Disabilities
317 Knutson Dr.
Madison, WI 53704
608/249-2151

Northern Wisconsin Center for Developmental Disabilities
Chippewa Falls, WI 54927
715/723-5542

Southern Wisconsin Center for Developmental Disabilities
Union Grove, WI 53182
414/878-2411

Mendota Mental Health Institute
301 Troy Dr.
Madison, WI 53704
608/244-2411

Winnebago Mental Health Institute
Winnebago, WI 54985
414/235-4910

(Concerning transportation: It seems that the most efficient way for parents to address the transportation needs of their children is to either contact the program concerned (e.g., the school district), or their County Department of Community (or Social) Services.)

(Concerning housing: Parents should contact either their County Disability Board, or County Human Services Board, as most group homes, sheltered apartments, etc. are at least in part county funded.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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A well thought out approach to parent-teacher cooperation, emphasizing parents' roles as co-teacher.

Becker, Wesley C., Parents are Teachers: A Child Management Program, Research Press, Champaign, Illinois, 1971.

Detailed discussion on behavior management and observing your child.

Biklen, Douglas, Let Our Children Go, Human Policy Press, Syracuse, New York, 1974.

A clear, compelling explanation of why we need advocacy and how to do it. Lots of illustrative examples.

Brown, Sara L. and Moersch, Martha S., editors, Parents on the Team, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1978.

A collection of pieces written by parents and professionals involved in an early intervention program.

Children's Defense Fund, It's Time to Stand up for your Children: A Parent's Guide to Child Advocacy, 1978.

Clearly written.

Flyn, Robert G. and Nitsch, Kathleen E., editors, Normalization, Social Integration, and Community Services, University Park Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1980.

Short resource articles in an expensive, but worthwhile paperback.

Gliedman, John and Roth, William, The Unexpected Minority: Handicapped Children in America, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1980.

Long, but readable and enlightening discussion of how our society treats people with handicaps.

Klein, Stanley D., Psychological Testing of Children, A Consumer's Guide, The Exceptional Parent Press, 1977.

Discussion of testing as a sample of behavior --little discussion on actual scoring or comparison of specific tests.

Long, Kate, Johnny's such a Bright Boy, What a Shame He's Retarded, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977.

Readable, part fictional, part factual, analysis of what makes good exceptional education work.

Mopsik, Stanley and Agard, Judith, editors, An Education Handbook for Parents of Handicapped Children, Abt Books, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1980.

An exceptionally clear handbook.

National Association for Retarded Citizens, Research and Demonstration Institute, The Parent Professional Partnership, Book 1: The Right to Education, Book 2: Classroom Programming, Book 3: The Partnership, Arlington, Texas, 1977.

Clear and helpful.

Office of Special Education, "The Education for All Handicapped Children Act", P.L. 94-142.

A basic resource for parents, educators, and educational advocates.

Perske, Robert, New Direction for Parents of Persons who are Retarded, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1973.

An easy to read, clear book dealing with daily living.

Wolfensberger, Wolf, Normalization: The Principle of Normalization in Human Services, National Institute on Mental Retardation, November, 1972.

Detailed, but worthwhile.

Other resources: Contact the disability groups listed in this manual for bibliographies. Both the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities and the Association for Retarded Citizens have excellent bibliographies.

The magazine, The Exceptional Parent, contains many articles of interest as well as a list of available books.

Closer Look (1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036) publishes periodical newsletters and provides other publications.